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ABSTRACT

One in a series of annual publications, this booklet contains reviews of books relating to the teaching of English and the language arts. The books are divided into 12 categories: teaching principles and practice, source books and course books, writing, teaching reading, books for the slower reader, dictionaries and oral work, prose, poetry, drama, mass media, children's literature, and literary criticism. A final section briefly notes additional books of interest. Lists of reviewers and an index of books reviewed are also included. (FL)

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ENGLISH IN AUSTRALIA

Number 44, August, 1978

The A.A.T.E. Guide to English Books 1978

Edited by Roslyn Arnold

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GUIDE TO ENGLISH BOOKS
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Contents

Editor's Note 3
Teaching Principles and Practice 5
Source Books and Course Books 13
Writing 22
Teaching Reading 25
Books for the Slower Reader 27
Dictionaries and Oral Work 35
Prose 39
Poetry 42
Drama 45
Mass Media 51
On Children's Literature 54
Literary Criticism 56
Briefly 62
Index 67

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Editor's Note

The *A.A.T.E. Guide to English Books* is presently under review! Because there is considerable time and expense involved each year in producing the *Guide*, the A.A.T.E. would like to know whether this time and expense is justified. Is the *Guide* useful to A.A.T.E. members?

I am aware that state E.T.A. journals and newsletters have reviews of relevant books throughout the year, but readers of the *Guide* have said that they find it helpful to have one journal containing a large number of reviews for ready reference.

I am also aware that some members consult the *Guide* when ordering new text and school books. Others treat it as a source for professional reading. It would help me as editor, and the A.A.T.E., to know your reactions to this publication. If you have any general comments, or helpful ideas regarding the *Guide's* content, format or usefulness, please write to me c/- Department of Education, University of Sydney 2006. Unless the *Guide* has the support of A.A.T.E. members, its publication may cease.

My thanks again this year to Mr John Collerson, Mrs Joyce Moore, and the reviewers and publishers who all helped considerably with this journal.

ROSLYN ARNOLD

Teaching Principles and Practice

Talking, Writing and Learning 8-13, by Margaret Mallett and Bernard Newsome, Schools Council Working Paper 59 (Evans/Metheun Education), London, 1977, Paperback, 253 pp., $13.20.

If you are a Head of Department reading this review, order a copy of this splendid book for your staff, "sight unseen". In some respects, it is a difficult book to review here as it really deserves a full review article.

Some details about it. It is the report of the Schools Council English in the Middle Years of Schooling Project, Goldsmiths' College, University of London. It offers a very large section on various contexts in which talking, writing and learning take place in the lives of children in different subjects at school. It shows children writing and talking for various purposes and for various audiences. Examples, comments, and the theoretical framework informing the book are easily blended into an informative, thoroughly involving text. It also offers sections titled, *Systematic learning: what is involved?*; *Talking to learn*; *Writing*; *Implications for the curriculum*; a Foreword by James Britton and a most helpful bibliography.

Some impressions of it. If you have been following the work done by the English teams of the Schools Council in the past thirteen years or so, you will be familiar with the kinds of theory and practice those teams have been developing and writing about in that time. Names such as James Britton, Nancy Martin, the Rosens, Douglas Barnes and the present authors will be familiar to you, as will the theories of Vygotsky, Langer, Bruner, Harding and Polanyi. As James Britton says in his Foreword, "A reader cannot fail to be struck by the breadth of views and sympathies that these two observers take into the classrooms that provided their data; and while they consistently look beyond the 'how' to the 'why', there is nothing doctrinaire in their judgements and no simple orthodoxy emerges."

If you are not familiar with the names mentioned above, then this book has even more to offer you. In a very readable style, the theories underlying the practices chosen by the authors for comment, are explained and exemplified through a range of examples.

This is not the kind of book to give teachers easy answers to their pupils' immediate learning problems. It is a book to be read, absorbed, put into practice tentatively, even courageously. It is the insights one gains from reading the book which subtly inform one's own teaching. I think the authors would agree with me that the process of change in both teachers and pupils can be a slow, often difficult process, requiring patience, the ability to cope with making mistakes, a sympathetic environment and a good deal of faith.

Here is a book for teachers working with children 8-13 in contexts where talking, writing and learning are important aspects of experience. Which means that the book is meant not only for English teachers. Buy the book for yourself, and for your staff. Encourage people to read it at a time when they can withdraw from their immediate classroom problems. I think it will be an inspiring book

both for people familiar with the kinds of attitudes shaping it, and for people new to this scene. It may even be a source for change in teaching practice! Books like this one make a "back to basics" movement seem a tragic waste of time and energy.

R.A.

Language, Learning and Remedial Teaching, by Roger Gurney (Edward Arnold), London, 1976, 108 pp., $7.20.

Another title in the *Explorations in Language Study* series, this book is concerned with both the theoretical basis and practical requirements of remedial work. The author, an advisory teacher in language and reading for an English county, has a background in teaching, educational therapy, child psychology and biology. He questions some prevailing attitudes to remedial work, especially the assessment of disability based on a cultural expectation of average attainment. He is dubious about the validity of ascribing specific learning difficulties to certain children and suggests more than once that the schools and even the teaching may sometimes be at fault. Another effect of community expectations is that certain abilities such as reading, maths and spelling are singled out as the basis for remedial work; other subjects or activities in which there might be just as great a range of abilities are never a focus for remedial attention. However, he stresses that in questioning the assumptions behind much remedial work he is not questioning the need for giving pupils special help.

Gurney believes we should give much more attention to how children learn and succeed than to how they fail. Accordingly he provides an outline of how children learn language, referring especially to Halliday's account of it, and he also discusses the nature of language text and the processes of gaining meaning through listening and reading.

There is some discussion of the assessment of reading ability; the most useful kind he considers is that which analyses the processes that are going on when the children read and not merely the categories of errors. He is highly critical of assessment purely of reading age. Some brief examples of the method of analysis being advocated by Gurney are given. The final chapter gives an outline of a method of providing remedial help for children in need of help with their reading. However, the main thrust of the book is not so much to provide immediate help as long-term development of the teacher's competence based on reflection and further study.

J.W.C.

Child language, learning and linguistics: An overview for the teaching and therapeutic professions, by David Crystal (Edward Arnold), London, 1976, 106 pp., $6.00.

This is in some ways an ambitious book and I'm not sure that all its ambitions are realised in its one hundred pages. The subtitle shows that one of its ambitions is to reach a wide audience of people concerned with language teaching and language development in various ways: teachers, speech therapists,

psychologists and so on. Another ambition implicit in the book is to be not only an overview but also an introduction and the book is to some extent torn between the two concepts.

Nevertheless the book is a useful one in that it has some very good sections and a lot of helpful insights scattered through it. The section on child language is probably the best and would serve as a good introduction for anyone not familiar with that topic. It is preceded by a general chapter on "Linguistics" which is more of an overview; its content becomes too dense too early to be useful as an introduction. The final chapter on language learning is good in parts. The examples used made it seem more applicable to E.S.L. teaching and to language therapy than to mother tongue English teaching in ordinary school classes. However, the discussion refers to many issues relevant to ordinary English teaching and makes some sound observations on them, though some of them are aspects of teaching which it is difficult to deal with both briefly and satisfactorily. One consolation is that there are adequate references and a teacher could well use this short book as a starting point for further reading.

J.W.C.

32 Voices—*From Bunbury to Perth with the Language and Learning Project*, edited by the Project Officer, Jon Cook (Education Department of W.A.), 1977, 221 pp. (Further details—write to publisher—Curriculum Branch, Education Department of W.A., Claver House, 823 Wellington St., Perth 6000.)

This is a report of the activities of the first six months of the Language and Learning Project in Western Australia. In it 32 people sharing common concerns about children's learning through language share with us their insights, their hypotheses, their work with their pupils, and outlines of the particular projects they undertook in their schools as part of the Language and Learning Project.

Nancy Martin worked in Western Australia during the first half of 1977 and contributed her expertise to the project. Jon Cook, the Project Officer, says, "Her voice informs the entire report". She contributes a chapter on *An Outsider's View of the Language and Learning Project* in which she makes comparisons between the London Project which she directed and the Western Australia project. Her comment, "It takes time to get people to change their ideas about themselves and their roles" (p. 195) conveys the spirit of her own work and that of this project.

I see this report as an excellent resource book for teachers planning to work in similar projects, Heads of Department interested in inspiring teachers to work together across the curriculum in looking at the ways children learn through language, Curriculum Officers organising in-service conferences and classroom teachers looking for examples of children's talking and writing in different contexts.

We do not know enough about children's language and learning in Australian schools. Nor do we know enough about teachers' attitudes to language in educa-

tion. The Eduction Department in Tasmania with its Language Across the Curriculum Project under John Annells' direction, and the Education Department of Western Australia with this project have given the lead to other states. Let's have more reports like *32 Voices*.

R.A.

Language Across the Curriculum, by Michael Marland (Heinemann), London, 1977, Paperback, 309 pp., $11.20; **Language Across the Curriculum:** Guidelines for Schools (N.A.T.E./Ward Lock), London, 1976, Paperback, 38 pp., $1.50; **Talking and Learning,** by Joan Tough (Ward Lock), London, 1977, Paperback, 316 pp., $6.00; **Children and Language** (West Sussex County Council), Basingstoke, 1976, Paperback, 117 pp., $7.75; **Teaching: Active or Passive,** by G. Riddell and D. Gulland (Holmes McDougall), Edinburgh, n.d., Paperback, 103 pp., $5.40; **Teaching Children English: A Language Policy for Primary and Middle Schools,** by Cedric Cullingford (Ward Lock), London, 1977, Paperback, 120 pp., $4.60.

None of these titles arrived in time to be given the detailed attention that at least three of them deserve, but it would seem more valuable to give them brief recognition now, thus alerting interested teachers to their existence, than to hold them over until the 1979 edition of the *Guide*.

The Bullock Report was the initial stimulus for three of these books: the two on language across the curriculum and Cullingford's *Teaching Children English*. Michael Marland's book, the most substantial of the three, is sub-titled "The implementation of the Bullock Report in the secondary school". The book is in three parts: Part I establishes the need for a language policy and attempts to set out a sound theory of language; Part II deals with the components of such a policy; Part III is concerned with putting a policy into practice. Marland enlists the aid of other authorities: there are chapters by Douglas Barnes, Nancy Martin, W. A. Gatherer, Colin Harrison. A very quick skim-reading of the book suggests that these are some of the most valuable chapters: Gatherer covers a huge amount of ground in his "Language and Education" and in doing so provides a sound theoretical base for the rest of the book; Douglas Barnes cogently argues the need for close observation of classroom communication; Nancy Martin succinctly summarises the work of the Writing Across the Curriculum Project. The one chapter of this group that misfires is "The Phonic Approach" by Ann Dubs, which shows a dangerous concentration on what is after all only one of the components of reading, though fortunately its bias is corrected elsewhere in the book.

For those too busy to read Marland's book—and it is surely required reading for anyone in an executive position in a school—the N.A.T.E. pamphlet is a brief document which covers much the same ground. It is designed to be used in a workshop situation by staff working on a language policy; were I a school principal I would order copies for the whole staff.

Teaching Children English claims to provide a language policy for primary and middle schools, but it is less a policy statement than an ideas book, with

literally hundreds of suggestions for activities, each followed by a brief paragraph justifying or further describing it. Many of the ideas are very good: I liked particularly one which suggests looking at the language of translation as evidenced by the descriptions on LP record sleeves, such as those of Deutsche Grammaphon. But what about: "Take a passage of prose and ask children to underline all adverbs"? While there are too many of the latter type, the book would be a useful addition to the English Department library, to be flipped through when inspiration is running dry.

Joan Tough's *Talking and Learning* is directed at teachers in nursery and infant schools, and its purpose is to help them recognise and use opportunities for promoting communication skills. I cannot pretend to have given this book more than the briefest examination, but from this it is clear that the strongly practical orientation should make it very valuable indeed for those working with the under-sevens.

Children and Language is concerned with the development of children's spoken and written language during the early and middle years of schooling. It is beautifully produced, full of common sense and practical suggestions. While it is clearly more relevant to primary teachers than to secondary teachers, any of the latter who have done little or no reading in the area would find it an excellent starting point.

At a time when any aspect of English that is even faintly innovatory is likely to be the subject of ill-informed attack, it is important that soundly based research gets the widest publicity. *Teaching: Active or Passive* is the report of the Craigie College Language Project in Scotland. The Project produced three sets of resources of a thematic nature for children between the ages of ten and fourteen: *Workshop in English—The Sea*, *Workshop in English—Underground*, and *Workshop in English—The Farm*. (The first of these was reviewed in the 1975 *Guide*.) The Project team then set about evaluating what happens "when children's work in English is the context of centres of interest rather than out of reading books and other texts, English exercises and set pieces of oral work and formal composition". It is impossible here to cite all the results of this painstaking piece of research, but one result that will surprise the back-to-basics lobby is that the ten classes which spent over four hours a week on exercises in grammar, punctuation and sentence correction did *not* have fewer errors in their writing than the classes which spent half that amount of time on such work. Two points came out very clearly. First, there is no evidence that children who follow a thematic programme will read and write less well than those who follow a traditional English course. Secondly, it is important that a programme based on centres of interest be properly structured and resourced if the children are to get maximum benefit from it.

K.W.

Reading and Teaching Poetry, Vol. 3, ed. Dennis Robinson (E.T.A. of N.S.W.), Ashfield, 1977, iix44 Qto pages, Paperback, $2.00.

Dennis Robinson has collected in this latest addition to the E.T.A. of N.S.W.'s Reading and Teaching series six articles relating to the teaching of poetry in the

secondary school. His own introduction is full of sound common sense and strong pedagogy. Dr Susan Moore's contribution pleads for greater rigour in handling the "honest response" in the classroom. June Webb looks at three favourite poems for Years 11 and 12, Cavafy's "Expecting the Barbarians", Joseph's "Man in a Bar", and Zbigniew Herbert's "The Seventh Angel".

In an interesting report Ros Arnold reports on attitudes towards poetry writing revealed by a group she interviewed from a Year 9 class in a Girls' School. Helen Willis and Marjorie Aldred report on group work in poetry at Year 9 and Year 11 respectively. The articles do not provide quick solutions for teachers who read them, but all six are founded in good theory and good practical application of that theory. For the thoughtful and diligent. G.C.

Reading and Teaching the Novel, Vol. 4, ed. by Barry Smith (English Teachers' Association of N.S.W.), 96 Chandos Street, Ashfield 2131. Booklet $2.00.

This is a volume of suggested classroom treatment of the senior novels: *Great Expectations*, *Mr Johnson*, *The Power and the Glory*, *The Go-Between*, *Mansfield Park* and *Persuasion*.

The beauty of this little volume lies in the different approaches of the contributors. While each chapter shows a treatment of an individual novel, the ideas can be transferred to other novels.

As in the similar volume on junior novels, treatment is not prescriptive, it is detailed enough to help the inexperienced teacher of novels to the senior school level; but it does not suggest that "this is the only way". As teachers gain experience they can use the ideas as they see fit. Teachers should read this book, even if they are not treating these particular novels. J.F.

Reading and Teaching the Novel, Vol. 5, Junior Edition, ed. Barry Smith (English Teachers' Association of N.S.W.), Sydney, 43 pp., Paperback, $2. (This publication is available only from the E.T.A. of N.S.W. Office, 96 Chandos Street, Ashfield 2131.)

This book contains eight essays which offer innovative and practical approaches for teaching the novel to juniors. The novels treated are: *Kes*, *A Wrinkle in Time*, *Smith*, *The Day of the Triffids*, *Lord of the Flies*, *Island of the Blue Dolphins*, *The Outsiders* and *The Hobbit*.

The writers are keenly aware of the teacher's need to explore methods that will engage the interest and involvement of the students. Throughout the essays suggestions are advanced as to how to structure situations so that the students can express and explore their own reactions, relate to the experiences of the novels, air their ideas and interpretations and develop them and see the relevance and significance of key scenes. Thematic approaches are sometimes used and the selected material could be very valuable.

These essays are stimulating for those interested in finding innovative and more successful methods of teaching the novel. The methods are original, thoughtful and could extend the approaches and resourcefulness of the teacher. H.W.

Source Books and Course Books

Wordswork—The Language of Literature and Life, by Robert D. Eagleson (ed.), (Methuen), Australia, 1977, 184 pp., $6.95.

When the linguists abandon their take-over bid for English and the dust finally settles, it may be possible to discover that there have been some valuable side-effects. One would seem to be the new emphasis which English textbooks writers (and teachers?) now give, not only to "language studies" and "language uses", but, more recently, to "literary uses of language".

In one sense this is not new: I. A. Richards and Leavis and Thompson were saying similar things almost fifty years ago. The distinguishing emphasis in recent English textbooks has been their focus on the varying contexts and purposes of language use (including literature), and the relationship of these to the out-of-school world of the pupil. Robert Eagleson and his contributors clearly have this focus in mind in *Wordswork*:

> The purpose of this book is to explore the characteristics of a number of the different manifestations of language. Our illustrations are drawn from both life and literature. . . . We seek to show the distinctive characteristics of the language used for a specific purpose. We also consider the similarities and differences in language as it appears in literature and life.

In a series of separate chapters containing extracts from literature, journalism, textbooks and occasionally transcripts of spoken English, the authors examine the language of politics, humour, dialect, argument, religion, the news, literary criticism, love, sport and work. Teachers of year twelve English should certainly read this book: the breadth of the study and range of suggestions for further activities or "explanations" provide an excellent base for reviewing the scope of our own teaching, and for reminding us that attentive, reflective reading is crucial in fostering both discrimination and pleasure. However, as a text for pupils I have reservations about this book, some more serious than others.

In order to provide starting points for the analysis of language in different contexts, the book relies heavily on extracts—often little more than snippets—from novels, plays and sometimes poetry. "A literary text exists as an intelligible whole" argues Professor Kramer in the chapter on the language of literary criticism, yet this book is full of fragments: Shakespeare, Sheridan, Shaw, Miller, Bolt, Orwell, Lawrence, Austen, to name some are, as it were, ransacked for decontextualised examples—often appearing in a very strange light as a result. In the chapter entitled "Sport and Recreation" the subtle gamesmanship of Emma and Mrs Elton (sport? recreation?) sits uneasily beside extracts from the sporting pages of newspapers ("Thommo, You're the Greatest") and "Sport Imagery in Shakespeare" ("Ay, there's the rub" shows that Shakespeare knew about bowls) looks equally uncomfortable. Hetero-ingenious ideas are indeed yoked by violence together.

The section on social dialect raises the question of inappropriateness by presenting several brief quotations illustrating Eliza Doolittle at her worst (or best?). The reader is *told* that this creates "one of the central comic scenes in

Pygmalion, but is denied the opportunity to discover and enjoy how or why this is so. At the very least the whole scene could have been included (as Henderson and Shepherd do in a similar study in their successful book *Language Moves*). In this section particularly, the dependence on the written word (in this case mainly *Huckleberry Finn*) is very limiting. Diverse material is needed. For example, a study of the excellent film, "Language at Twelve" would be entirely appropriate.

Sometimes the extracts demand too much from the reader. In order to understand the particular thrust of A. J. P. Taylor's argument (two long paragraphs from *The Origins of the Second World War*) the reader needs a much broader historical knowledge than the two extracts provide. It is ultimately paradoxical that a book dedicated to the study of language in context can offer so many examples of language out of context.

A second problem is created by the authors' admirable desire to offer a text which integrates the study of language and literature. The result is often disappointingly reductive, doing less than justice to both the power of the text and the possible response of the pupil. The first "exploration" to follow "Carrion Comfort" (The Language of Religion) invites the student to find out the biblical references which form the basis for the allusions to winnowing and wrestling. Not an encouraging first step, surely. A theme such as the language of politics and revolution clearly requires, alongside historical and literary examples, some of the urgent voices of our own time. There is room for Wesker's passionate plea "Words as Definitions of Experience" as well as Sir Henry Vane's speech to Parliament in 1659, with questions on "superlatives", "highly coloured or strong terms", "appeal to authority", "use of the first person", "rhetorical questions". Somehow this kind of language exploration in territory as powerful as politics and revolution runs the risk of missing the point. It offers instead language questions as trivial and arid as those that accompanied old-style comprehension passages. Too much is spelt away. Another paradox.

Perhaps the most successful chapter is "The Language of Work" which offers fascinating examples drawn from law and science. The author provides a lucid analysis of scientific argument and style. Swift's description of Laputa from *Gulliver's Travels* is used as a neat demonstration of satire directed at scientific writing. Is it a final paradox that the chapter which makes least attempt to "integrate the study of language and literature" is nevertheless the most coherent?

It is important to emphasise that the authors do pay students and teachers the compliment of choosing from potentially challenging and demanding texts, very much in the tradition of the best that has been thought and known in the world. The tone may be pedantic, but it is never patronising. At worst it is too difficult. "The Language of Literary Criticism" is a careful essay which offers the student a warning against "lit. crit." rather than an invitation to "appreciation". The three passages illustrating anthropological, Freudian and Marxist interpretations of literature, and the short extract from Empson, are esoteric in the extreme. It is hard to see what the average—or even academic—year twelve student could make of this analysis. A group of university English graduates I gave it to found it almost unmanageable (perhaps standards in university English departments are also falling).

The book, then, poses problems. I suggest teachers should read it, along with Robinson's erratic, though persuasive, *The Survival of English* and Widdowson's *Stylistics and the Teaching of Literature.* I believe a better course book for students would be found in the excellent *Language Matters* series. But *Wordswork* is a valuable source for teachers to draw on and expand, providing they keep in mind Rob Eagleson's own sound advice to the reader:

1. Do not take for granted anything you read in this book. Test it out for yourself.
2. Use the comments and the exercises only as a starting point. Stretch out from there.
3. Continue to look for other parallels in literature and life and explore the language used in both.

Finally, this book should not be dismissed. It is neither a part of the mad scramble for relevance, nor does it give aid and comfort to the back-to-basics fanatics. It offers serious food for thought. It has a touch of dignity about it.

M.G.

A Guide to Language and Literature by R. D. Eagleson and Leonie Kramer (Nelson), Melbourne, 1977, 95 pp., Soft back, $5.95.

Eagleson and Kramer earlier wrote *Language and Literature: a Synthesis*, a text aimed mainly at senior secondary students of English and college students. The latter book argued that the recent tendency in thinking about the teaching of English to see the study of literature and of language as separate activities, had been wrong and misleading. The authors went on to produce a series of chapters in that book intended to demonstrate how the two studies could and should be related, and the kinds of understandings that could be developed.

This book is really a sequel. It examines a number of poems or extracts from poems, as well as extracts from a variety of other literary forms.

Each extract or set of extracts is considered under a general heading (e.g. "allusion, symbol and allegory" or "narrative modes" or "words and word structures" or "social and regional variation"). In each case, the authors provide a short discussion and a set of questions for student discussion or with which to examine such literary works as they may currently be reading in class work.

The book attempts to guide students into a habit of close examination of the literature they read, developing care in considering the various features of language, its meanings, organisation and structures, as these are exemplified in the works of different writers.

It seems to me true that we currently need works dealing with how to integrate studies of language and literature and to that extent I welcome the appearance of this book. If it is to be used well, however, I think its use will need to be carefully tempered by the teacher's intervention. I say this because the average secondary student may well be very reluctant to sit at and read closely a book which consists of a series of extracts, even though they have been selected and arranged carefully. It is the teacher who must determine how to use such a

14

resource, and who must select from and adapt ideas in the book, as they seem needed in the context of classroom work in English.

F.C.

Whywords: The Shapes of Shadows, by A. Burton et al. (Reed Education), Sydney, Soft covers, 85 pp., $3.75.

This language book is designed for 14-16 year olds and is one of a series that explores the functions of language in everyday life, based on a simplified grouping of M. A. K. Halliday's seven functions of language. *Whywords: The Shapes of Shadows* explores the imaginative function, while other books in the series pursue such functions as the personal, the regulatory, the interactional function, to name but a few.

This is a most attractive resource book, well illustrated, and offering a wide variety of classroom activities in language. The source material in the book is both literary and non-literary and should easily capture the interest of students.

Shapes of Shadows is a welcome addition to language resources in the junior years, not only in its own right but as an antidote to the smattering of old-style language books that seem to be making a comeback and which lead us all up a blind alley. The scales have been taken from our eyes in language teaching. Let's go forward bravely.

M.P.

Language One: An English Course for Secondary Schools, by R. K. Sadler, T. A. S. Hayllar, C. J. Powell (Macmillan), Melbourne, 1977, 208 pp., Soft back, $4.50.

Write Now: Some Stimuli for Reading and Writing, Book One, by R. K. Sadler and P. A. Young (William Brooks), Sydney, 1977, 113 pp., Soft back.

English for the Middle Years, by Eileen Sanders (Blackie), U.K., 1977, 108 pp., Soft back.

The current reappearance of books such as these three is, I suppose, a sign of the times—an expression of what has become an anxiety among English teachers about what to do in the name of language and grammar teaching.

Such books reflect a loss of confidence on the part of English teachers in the so-called "new English", and an attempt to go back to the older patterns of teaching English, including comprehension passages and questions, identification of parts of speech, structured writing and punctuation exercises and spelling lists.

Sadler et al. say that "in the last ten years there has been a drift away from the study of formal language skills in English," and that as a result, "a generation of students grew up with little understanding of the foundation of English, and though their interest may have been high, their linguistic competence was, all too often, alarmingly low".

One would like to know what is meant by "linguistic competence" here. I am myself concerned with competence in language and I believe that the teacher

does have a role in consciously teaching for its development. The point and issue here is this: what evidence is there that exercises of the sort set out here actually bring about the kind of competence sought?

Why is it helpful to ask children to read selected passages from novels, short stories and newspapers, and answer comprehension questions? Why remove a very natural interest in teaching for comprehension from the very context in which one would expect to be fostering its development anyway—in consideration, for example, of the very works of literature being read in class anyway? Is not discussion of, and writing about, poems, stories, plays read and acted, itself a comprehension activity?

Why should exercises in recognition of parts of speech and spelling, be set up as essentially arbitrary exercises? Why are we not asked to teach for a competence in use?

What is needed, it seems to me, is that the teacher have a considerable knowledge of language and how it works, including an understanding of many of the insights offered by linguistics, and that in the light of that the teacher plans to introduce and use concepts to do with language and how it works, as and when the need arises. Where language exercises are devised and taught, they should seek to identify and build upon the knowledge of language all speakers of a language have. Much language teaching is, if we can only perceive it properly, a matter of making explicit such knowledge of language that any speaker already has. The alternative model of language teaching is in my view, much more exciting than that implied by books such as these.

F.C.

Learning Through Language, by Barry Walters and Les Allen (Pergamon), Sydney, 1977, 119 pp., Paperback, $5.95.

According to its authors, this source book was written to "encourage children to write expressively against a background of learning, rather than fantasy." It is quite a structured programme based on samples of expressive writing. Some of the articles which are suggested are designed to promote imaginative student responses and represent all that is exciting about modern English teaching. For example, groups of students are asked to rewrite and produce part of Ray Bradbury's *The Dragon* as a radio play. Also, care is taken to suggest potential audiences for the writing tasks.

On the other hand, each chapter ends with a Focus in Skills section with spelling lists of words which have usually not appeared in the preceding pages and usage exercises of the Correction of Faulty Sentences type which ought to be discredited on a number of counts including that of authenticity. "I goes there very often" and "It ain't far away" are hardly common examples of spoken usage by Australian high school students.

Learning Through Language has a lot to offer the teacher who selects from its range of lesson ideas but I am less enthusiastic about its suitability for student use.

J.W.

Contemporary English, by John Foster (Macmillan Educational), Houndmills Basingstoke Hampshire and London, 1977, 125/118 pp., Paperback, $5.95.

Volume 1 covers the themes of *Love . . . and marriage*; *Being young . . . growing old*; *Gangs and victims*; *Outsiders*; *Sportscene*. Volume 2 deals with *Work*; *War, Crime and punishment*; *The Future*.

These are very useful English source-books in that they provide a wide range of stimulus material on a number of themes and issues relevant to the teenager of 1978. They present a wide variety of language experiences especially for the environmentally unstimulated. This is done visually and verbally, often startlingly provocatively in presentation. The books deal graphically and in a straightforward manner with the more sensitive areas of personal relationships, human growth and development, the human environment and the human condition. The illustrations come from a wide variety of sources, particularly TV, films, posters, advertisements and the popular press.

The books contain a strong emphasis on the roles of women and men in society and they challenge older notions in every area they cover, whilst emphasising awareness of attitudinal differences. The author suggests a wide range of highly useful follow-up activities which include discussion, improvisation, books, films, shorts, writing activities, talking, interview and drama activities. The additional reference materials listed are valuable in themselves for the English teacher and the fast reader. Slower readers will find much to ponder and discuss in these pages. Most of the material can be readily adapted and supplemented from other sources.

The heavy sociological and environmental emphasis in these books is largely of an English bias, but there is much of value to the Australian classroom situation. Similarly, much of the related film and other visual material may not be readily available here. There are excellent suggestions for miming, acting and drama activities for those teachers interested in pursuing an integrated curriculum. The books make wide use of the current available range of classroom techniques in the teaching of English, including appropriate use of visual and audio equipment as aids.

These books are best viewed as adjuncts to an English programme where the thematic approach is considered desirable, or as useful segments *per se* in a wider curriculum plan.

In general, these books demonstrate how the visual arts can be integrated into an English programme even if one does emerge from the experience, at times, somewhat over-wrought from the ultra-realism of it all. One might wish for a less startlingly photographic approach and a few softer scenes here and there, but the visually-oriented youth of 1978 may find this aspect totally appealing. On occasions the visual challenge overwhelms the verbal challenge and a more sensitive visual artistry could more subtly suggest tender prose or poetic moments than those which too often expose themselves from posters, billboards, large advertisements, or the screen. Visually the books leave little to the imagination in parts, and there are few grey areas. Nevertheless, used appropriately by individual teachers together with other suitable material these

books are a worthwhile contribution to current English teaching.

E.M.P.

The Language Tree: An English Handbook for Senior Students, by Anne Thompson (The Book Society of Canada Limited), Agincourt, Canada, 1976, 207 pp., $8.00 (Copy from Heinemann Educational Australia).

Put your $8.00 back in your pocket. I'm sure there is a place for an English handbook for senior students but this book doesn't meet the need. There are two reasons why it is unsuitable. One is that its Canadian origins are very obvious; it is a book written specifically for the Canadian market. This is not a criticism, simply an observation. The other reason for not using this book is a serious criticism. It is based purely on traditional grammar which means that some important aspects of the language are dealt with unsatisfactorily or not at all. Senior students should be allowed some of the insights derived from the past 100 years' extensive study of English grammar, which appears to have made no impact on the book at all. It preserves such absurdities as the supposed distinction between *shall* and *will* and the need to find "Substitutes for the Tired Verb *to Get*". And exercises—you've never seen such monumentally dull exercises absolutely guaranteed to kill English stone dead (underline the cliches). I'll (shall/will?) quote one of the author's examples (one of the livelier ones, I might add): "The road to Hell is paved with good intentions" which seems a vaguely appropriate place to stop.

J.W.C.

Dimensions, compiled by Mike Samuda and John L. Foster (Pergamon Press) Exeter, 1978, 80 pp., Soft cover, $1.90.

Four books in this series were received for review: *Adolescence, Love and Marriage* ($1.80), *School*, and *Black and White*. They are anthologies of verse and prose. Workcards are available for use with all books in the series. They are nicely presented, and likely to appeal to their audience. If you are in the market for such books, write for inspection copies of these.

D.S.

Leaving School: A Survival Guide, by Maureen Stewart (Rigby), Adelaide, 1978, 80 pp., Paperback, $4.25.

This book is intended for use in school. It is addressed to students about to leave school, but in many ways it might be more useful for ex-students in their first or second year out of school, when e.g. letters of application take on importance not always apparent when students are still at school.

Contents include "Filling in Forms", "Reading Directions on Labels and Cans", "How Safe is Your House?", "Your Telephone Directory", "Meetings", "Giving Directions" and "The Law and You". There are 14 such sections.

Not every student will find the book interesting, and many will find that they

have covered some of the issues elsewhere in their courses. For some, however, it could be helpful.

D.S.

A Word with You: Basic English for Secondary Schools, by B. A. Shaw (William Brooks), Queensland, 284 pp., Limp cover, $3.25.

"Make up an incorrect sentence for each of rule 7, rule 8, and rule 11; then change books in pairs and correct each others sentences. If you think the incorrect sentence hasn't been properly done, refer it to your teacher." (p. 38) (?)

If "rules" appeal to you, you'll enjoy this book. It contains about fifty of them. "Rule" (xxxiv), for example, insists that "The pronoun preceding a verbal-noun is possessive case".

Sometimes the sentence-correction exercises require students to ". . . write the rule that applies" under each correction.

"For everybody's sake try to spell your words correctly . . ." counsels the book at p. 253, and offers "permissable", "similies" and "caluses" (clauses?) by way of example in its text.

Don't waste your money on this one.

D.S.

Stride Ahead in English, by R. F. Eagle (Wheaton-Pergamon), Exeter, 1976, (A series—Books 4 and 5 received for review.) Book 4—112 pp., $2.20, Book 5—96 pp., $2.40, Limp cover.

Book 4 (1-3 also?) is a new impression of a 1964 publication. Mr Eagle has added book 4 "By request . . ." (he doesn't say whose request). In both books Mr Eagle favours a curious type of exercise in which students select and write down only the "sensible sentences" e.g. "Here are fifteen sentences about table manners. Ten are sensible. Five are silly. Write out those sentences which are sensible". (Book 4.)

Another interesting exercise mixes 12 lines of a Spring poem and 12 lines of an Autumn poem. Students are invited to write down the Autumn poem. (Book 4.)

A few vocabulary exercises are worth using, but they alone could not justify the purchase.

D.S.

Uncommon Common Sense—Signposts to Clear Thinking, by Gwyneth M. Dow (Pergamon Press), Sydney, 1977, 160 pp., Paperback, $4.75.

This book was originally issued by Cheshire in 1962, and went through five reprints, so it must have enjoyed popularity. It was written principally as a text for the "Clear Thinking" section of the senior Victorian syllabus, but in her "Preface to the Revised Edition" Miss Dow claims that ". . . it has had a general reading public and has been studied in a number of tertiary institutions as well as schools . . ."

It seems ironic that a book which aims to encourage clear thinking should give its readers so few opportunities to rely on their own reasoning abilities. Most of the time one simply reads what Mrs Dow has to say about the examples, and that's that. Example: "When you have thought about these things, you might try to make up your mind whether Swift writes as a narrow-minded and opinionated man who really enjoys making the despised sex smart while he appears to offer it help, or whether his purpose is the more positive one of shaming women into helping themselves." (p. 95)

A copy for the faculty library, and one for the school library. If you must purchase a set for your senior students (who will need to be good readers), 1:2 for class work should suffice.

D.S.

Further reviews in **Stop Press** p. 64.

Writing

A flood of inquiry and research into the teaching of writing is being reported in U.S. books and journals. Part of it is a richly funded response to the "basics" controversy; another part represents a maturing of the thought and experiment carried on intensively in the past ten years by a brilliant band of teachers, among whom Corbett, Young, Winterowd, Larson, Kinneavy, Rohman, Murray, Emig, Shaughnessy, Elbow, Macrorie spring to mind because of the frequency with which their names crop up in the journals.

These Americans deserve the immediate attention of every Australian teacher who is looking for answers to "the writing problem". For too long, Australian consideration of this problem has been mainly confined to ideas that have come to us in two waves from Britain—the "creative writing" wave of the 1960s (Langdon, Clegg, Holbrook, etc.) and the "writing across the curriculum" wave of the 1970s (the Schools Council research findings). Both of these have been immensely helpful in weaning us from earlier, stodgy methods of "composition" teaching. But there is an abundance of other good ideas available from American sources.

By way of example I would cite five of my own personal debts to Americans and illustrate each with a recent book that deserves purchase and study. The five are: rhetoric, process, free-writing, journals, remedial-writing. Let me explain each.

The "rhetoric school" of teachers of writing looks first to Aristotle and fosters study of the subsequent continuous history of teaching writing, knowing that many lessons can thus be learned and that fads, crazes and pendulum-swings are less likely to occur when one knows how many there have been in the past and how very complex the historical record has shown the teaching of writing to be. I look on **Teaching Composition: 10 Bibliographical Essays**, ed. Gary Tate (Texas Christian University Press, 1976, pp. 304, $A7.20) as a contribution from this school. Much more than a book list, it comments on all the "important works from Aristotle to the present"—though, understandably, most of its references are about writings of the 1960s and 1970s, the period of knowledge explosion on this subject. The ten chapters, each by a distinguished teacher, show the book's scope: Invention; Structure and Form; Style; Modes of Discourse; Basic Writing; Uses of Media in Composition; Linguistics and Composition; Rhetorical Analysis; Composition and Related Fields; Dialects and Composition.

The concept of writing as "process" rather than as a one-shot performance has become for me the master key to the teaching of writing. I stumbled on it first in 1969 in the essays of Donald M. Murray. He is one of the contributors to a recent book of readings, **Rhetoric and Compositon**, ed. Richard L. Graves (Hayden, N.J., 1976, pp. 341, $A10.37), and his article is titled "Teach Writing as Process not Product". The book contains 35 splendid articles and would be hard to beat as a single introduction to the range of U.S. writing about composition. May I add that the Tate volume mentioned previously traces the growth of

the notion of "process" from Gordon Rohman's seminal article on "pre-writing" in 1965 to the widespread use of the idea of "process" in the mid-seventies (see pp. 16-21, 33-40). In Australia, on my observation, it is only in the past two years that a significant minority of teachers are beginning to work seriously on the other end of the writing process: editing, polishing, rewriting, "publishing".

Even more recently there has been exciting experiment with free writing—growing, I believe, out of a deepening understanding of the writing process. **Free Writing! A Group Approach**, by J. Brown and thirteen other members of the Writing Programme at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Hayden, N.J., 1977), presents, in their words, "a new and simple method of learning and teaching writing" through various activities based on free writing. I do not see how any readers could fail to get helpful practical ideas here to add to whatever they are doing about writing. Certainly the book would be a useful introduction to the current American experimentation in this area.

The most concrete single idea to come out of the free writing movement is the "journal" (or "logbook"). This has been making rapid headway in Australia in the past two years, partly through the experience of John Payne, reported in the ETA of NSW's **English in Secondary Schools: Today and Tomorrow** (pp. 305-8). Payne acknowledges his debt to Daniel Fader whose famous book of 1966 has been updated as a cheap paperback, **The New Hooked on Books** (Berkley Medallion, N.Y., 1976, pp. 294, $2.50). It presents a whole approach to English teaching, but its account of journals indicates the vital place this kind of regular free-choice writing can have in a writing programme.

Finally, remedial writing. No one likes the term, and Mina P. Shaughnessy suggests instead "basic writing"—after all, it's about beginning where the individual child really is, back at a basic level where something went wrong. Her important book, **Errors and Expectations**, is subtitled "A Guide for the Teacher of Basic Writing" (Oxford University Press, N.Y., 1977, 376 pp., $US8.00). The author has been active in the huge remedial writing movement that has been going on in the U.S. since the late sixties; her book is based on analysis of 4,000 freshman essays. The chapters carry unexciting headings—Handwriting and Punctuation, Syntax, Common Errors, Spelling, Vocabulary, Beyond the Sentence, Expectations—but they contain material which even a perceptive teacher would need several lifetimes to discover by his/her own efforts. When I read (and copiously marked) her "Syntax" chapter I spontaneously scribbled *brilliant* at the end: it is so sensible, so un-trendy, so aware of the complexity of the writing problem, and so well informed about rhetoric, process, new ideas, recent insights from linguistics, and much more. It's a big book, but it's a goldmine, and I think every Australian teacher concerned with remedial writing at any level has got to buy it.

Postscript. For up-to-the-minute American thinking on writing, it is necessary to follow the journals of the U.S. National Council of Teachers of English. The specific journal on writing is **College Composition and Communication** ($US5.00), four times a year and every issue a feast. Secondary teachers, wishing to subscribe to only one journal, will probably prefer to get the bulky **English**

Journal ($US20.00), nine times a year, with a good deal on writing and everything else about English. The equivalent bulky primary journal is **Language Arts** ($US20.00), nine times a year. There is also the journal of teacher education, **English Education** ($US10.00), four times a year. Address of NCTE: 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801, USA. You need to add $US1.50 to your order for each of these journals to cover foreign posting. The best way to send money is by a bank draft, which any branch of a bank will arrange (drawn on NCTE via the Chemical Bank, New York); send the draft with your order.

R.D.W.

Teaching Reading

Interestingly, the best books offered for review on the teaching of reading are all Australian. **From Talkers to Readers the Natural Way**, by Harold Hopkins (Ashton Scholastic, Paperback, 1977, 48 pp., $1.75) is a lively introduction to language-experience methods of teaching reading. Engagingly illustrated by Paul Heffernan, it enables the teacher who lacks knowledge of modern methods to get a real grasp of them within half an hour—no mean achievement! It is highly recommended for any teacher, primary or secondary, whose training did not include a unit on the teaching of reading and who wants to repair the gap by beginning with a straightforward account of the whole process.

Also from Ashton Scholastic comes **Perspectives on Reading** (209 pp., Paperback, $6.75), the proceedings of the Second Australian Reading Conference held in Sydney in 1976. If one may judge from this collection of papers, the conference must have had a schizoid air about it. An excellent paper by Peter Rousch on "Some Psycholinguistic Objections to Traditional Reading Diagnosis" sits side by side with a paper on precision teaching which is based on precisely those assumptions which Rousch attacks. The first article, by Walter McGinitie, the President of the International Reading Association, warns against importing educational fads from the U.S.A., but some of the other articles show that his warning has come too late. McGinitie, incidentally, gives an interesting example of one State in the U.S.A. that went overboard for the phonics fad (as some schools in N.S.W. are now doing) and now finds that the pupils are scoring lower on reading comprehension than they did in the past:

> "This result should, of course, have been no surprise. The children in this State have simply spent relatively little time actually reading in the past few years. They have spent the time, instead, on just one of the component tasks of reading."

To say that *Perspectives on Reading* contains articles which contradict one another is not to condemn the volume, though it is to be hoped that future A.R.A. collections of conference papers will be more homogeneous. There are some excellent papers: apart from the Rousch and McGinitie articles already mentioned, there are worthwhile contributions by John Downing, Brian Cambourne and Walter McVitty, to name but three. Read selectively, *Perspectives on Reading* could prove rewarding. The book has been edited by Royce Levi, Grahame Forrest, Alan Watson and Bruce Bishop.

Perspectives on Reading illustrates very well the opposing schools of thought on the teaching of reading. A phonics faddist (phonicator?) and a psycholinguist have such diametrically opposed views of the reading process that their prescriptions for teaching will rarely be similar. It is important, therefore, that anyone writing a book on the teaching of reading let his readers know at the outset what his view is. Unfortunately, Peter Edwards, whose **Reading Problems: Identification and Treatment** (Primary Education Ltd., Paperback, Melbourne, 1976, 91 pp., $4.95) arrived just too late for inclusion in last year's *Guide*, keeps his readers in the dark on this fundamental question. This is a pity, for in other

respects the book has much to recommend it. For a teacher who comes to the book with a clear understanding of what reading is all about, the book could prove very useful indeed, since it takes six major types of reading difficulty and lists a wealth of suggestions drawn from reading specialists for the treatment of each. The novice teacher, however, will need to do some prior reading before he will be in a position to select wisely from Dr Edwards' list.

A new edition of the valuable **Books for the Retarded Reader** by J. Richardson, F. Caust and J. Hart (A.C.E.R., Melbourne, 1977, 6th edition, Paperback, $5.50) has just appeared. This excellent reference can be thoroughly recommended; every English Department should have a copy.

All four books so far reviewed can, with some slight reservations, be recommended to readers of the *Guide*. But the fifth Australian offering, **What's It All About?** by V. and L. Hoogstad (Jacaranda, Brisbane, 1978, Paperback, 151 pp., $5.25) should be approached with caution. Sub-titled "Comprehension in the Content Areas", it is based on the premise that there are discrete sub-skills of reading comprehension that can be trained in isolation from one another. It should be stated quite firmly that research has so far failed to identify such skills. Thus the claim that the development of such skills has an effect on reading comprehension is definitely not proven. When a book based on this proposition is mainly composed of tiny snippets, many of them of very little interest, one is entitled to feel fairly sceptical about the value of the book except as a means of keeping kids busy (there are lots and lots of questions to be answered). In the light of our present knowledge of reading development, it is much more likely that children's reading comprehension will be improved by a diet of interesting short stories, novels and factual articles catering for the individual's concerns and enthusiasms.

Finally, an overseas offering, **The Development of Reading Skills: A Book of Resources for Teachers** by Frances Ball (Blackwell, Oxford, 1977, Paperback, 120 pp., $11.25). Again, the value of the book depends on one's view of the reading process. For the infant or primary teacher who sees the teaching of reading as being the training of discrete skills, the book has many useful ideas, but at $11.25 it is surely too expensive. For those adhering to the psycholinguistic view of the reading process, the book offers much less, though it contains some activities that would be worthwhile in any reading programme.

K.W.

Books for the Slower Reader

The Top Flight Readers, by Henry A. Bamman and Robert J. Whitehead (Addison Wesley Publishing Co.), California/Crow's Nest, N.S.W., 1977, Hardback, 90 pp., $4.95. Teacher's Manual $2.50. Audio Cassettes of the stories also available.

Chopper, Test Pilot, Hang Glider, Bush Pilot, Barnstormers. The titles give an indication of the kinds of stories offered in this series. The books are well produced with interesting, well written stories and attractive illustrations. With their sturdy hard covers they should withstand school wear.

What reservations do I have about them? When the stories are good in themselves, why the persistence of the last dozen pages of the books devoted to tedious exercises? Normal readers do not have to answer questions on books they have read. The questions undercut the value of the story, turning it into a text-book in the reader's eyes. Furthermore, teachers may be mislead into thinking that they must encourage readers to answer those questions when they are an unnecessary burden on the reader. However, if you choose to ignore the questions, the books have much to offer.

R.J.

Rockets, (Macmillan), Melbourne, 1977, Paperback, 64-88 pp., $1.35.

Friend or Foe by Michael Morpurgo
Beasts of Plenty by John Kirkham
One Day, Another Day by Petronella Breinberg
A Spray of Leaves by Irma Chilton
Pollen Girl by Albert Rowe
Snake River by Aidan Chambers
The World of Col Kelly by Ray Jenkins
Pop's Shed by Len Smith

Rockets are for the lower secondary pupils—those for whom the *Topliners* are too advanced in story line. But I could imagine that the readers who like the *Rockets* might progress to the *Topliners*. There is no doubt that the stories in the *Rockets* series are first rate. They are printed clearly on good quality paper with evocative, varied illustrations. The books look like novels and do not have, thank goodness, questions at the back! Considering the high quality of content and appearance of these books, it is a great pity they seem to be badly bound. The front covers of the books I received were ready to come away from the books on first opening. If this could be remedied, at $1.35 these books represent good value. They are certainly the most exciting of the series I have seen for this age group.

R.J.

Flag Series, General Editor: Colleen Lindner (Macmillan), Melbourne, 1977, Paperback, $1.75.

A Star must Shine by Lesley Gill

Coral Queen by E. M. Webb
The Guns of Mandy's Gully by Roger Vaughan Carr
The Secret by Roger Vaughan Carr
Snowbound by Hazel Edwards
True Ghosts by Michael Dugan (6 stories)
Try to Remember by Anne Campbell
Finders Keepers by Amy Bunker

You are probably aware of the many earlier titles in this popular series. The type of the books is clear, the illustrations very good, the paper—just acceptable. *Flag* books have a word list at the back and I repeat my earlier comment that I think this destroys the impression that books are for enjoyable reading.

R.J.

Orbit Series (Macmillan), Melbourne, 1977, Paperback, 60-70 pp., $1.75.

Alice (4 plays) by Maureen Stewart
Barry by Pauline Reilly
Does Anyone Care? by Winsome Smith
I Want to be Me by Lucy Lonsdale
Jobs for the Boys by Patricia Price
The Partnership by Else Edwards
Running Away by Roger Vaughan Carr
The Travellers by Sheila Hatherley

The stories in this series centre around the preoccupations of adolescents and are written for pupils with a reading age of about 12. The stories are varied, interesting, and pertinent to readers' concerns in mid-adolescence. The illustrations are very imaginative too, but I am a little concerned about the poor quality of the paper in the books. Perhaps pupils do not worry about this but to me the paper is noticeably poor. However, if you think that this does not matter much, buy a set of these books as the stories offer much to interest the reluctant reader.

R.J.

Spinners, Set of 3 (Macmillan), Melbourne, 1977, Paperback, 30 pp. approximately $1.00 each, $5.95 the pack.

All Sally's Fault by Pat Brewer
Back Again by Hazel Edwards
A Cat Called Satan by Sheila Hatherley
Goal! by Michael Dugan
Killer by the Creek by Michael Dugan
What can go Wrong? by Sheila Hatherley

Spinners are a series of illustrated paperbacks for children with a reading age of 8-9 years and an interest level of 10-16 years. A sheet of Teacher's notes is included in each book, with suggested steps for syllabification.

The appearance, lay-out, print and illustrations in these books are most acceptable. The stories are involving and varied as far as they go, but a diet of

these stories alone would be linguistically bland. I wonder if we are sometimes too concerned with keeping within the reluctant readers vocabulary span when we could stretch their experience and imagination a bit more without turning them off reading.

At $1 a copy these books compare very favourably with others of their kind on the market.

R.J.

Trackers, by Charles Sains (Macmillan), Melbourne, Comic strip format, 32 pp., $1.65.

Trapped
Mercy Mission
Treasure Trove
Monkey Business
Catman
Tall Tales

I showed these booklets to a number of readers of various ages and they all liked the format. The top half of each page is illustrated with the text below, in graded sentences and simple paragraphs. The illustrations are stylish, the format interesting and the stories excellent. *Trackers* are for pupils with a reading age of 9-10 and an interest level of 11-14 years.

Unfortunately the last 2 pages are given to word exercises and I hope teachers ignore them and allow their pupils to enjoy reading these excellent booklets. For pupils who cannot manage to read a novel, these are recommended. In fact, you could hardly go wrong.

R.J.

Falcon Comics (Macmillan), Melbourne, 1977, Comic format, $1.00 approx.

Rollin' Through by Alex Nichols and Roger Vaughan Carr
Bobby's "Speedball" Two-Tones by Con Aslanis
The Glen Street Girls by Rick and Tina Amor
The Junk Shop by Rick and Tina Amor
Rock Island Rescue by Roger Vaughan Carr

While the format of these booklets is comic strip style, the stories and drawings fail to create that special world of true comics where characters like Phantom and Superman hold children's interest and feed their imaginations. The best title is *The Junk Shop* which comes close to the fantasy comic strip world.

What these booklets offer is simple stories set in comic strip format. I cannot help thinking that if imitation comic strips can "con" children into reading, why not give them real comics?

The comic strips in this series are underscored by syllabified vocabulary which further helps to destroy the illusion of the comic.

R.J.

Knight Riders (Hodder and Stoughton), Australia, Lane Cove, N.S.W., 1977, Paperback, 40-60 pp., $1.50

Mocking-Bird Man by Lilith Norman
Spanish Queen by Mavis Thorpe Clark
A Knight to Forget by Anne Farrell
Hostage by Michael Dugan
Teacher's Book Level 1

These are the first four titles in a series of Australian paperbacks for the reluctant teenage reader. The reading age of the stories is 7½-8½ years and the interest age is 10-16 plus. The books are very pleasing in appearance with the clear type, good illustrations and good paper we expect in books for the reluctant reader. Teachers who are familiar with the authors' other well known novels will know to expect good quality stories in these short novels, and they will not be disappointed.

Fortunately, all questions and activity suggestions are put together in a separate Teacher's Book. In fact, the activity suggestions are excellent—open-ended and imaginative, involving small groups work, drama and discussions.

This series is highly recommended. You could risk ordering "sight unseen" or ask for inspection copies.

R.J.

Headliners, General Editor John L. Foster (Edward Arnold), London, 1977, Paperback, 50 pp., approximately $2.40

Daredevils by Mike Samuda
Survivors from the Sea by Rod Hunt
Remarkable Animals by Rod Hunt
Recordbreakers by John L. Foster

In these books there is blended an impression of non-fiction and fiction stories. For example, as well as drawn illustrations, there are real photos of people in situations similar to those in the stories. In *Survivors from the Sea* there is a drawing of a cut-away section of a mini submarine with the parts labelled. For the readers who like information in a story, not just fictional content, these books help to meet that preference. The stories do have an English setting, though this may not matter.

These books are attractive in appearance, interesting in content and pleasing to handle. The price may deter some buyers, but if the books help reluctant readers to become keen readers, then the price may be worth paying.

R.J.

Bestellers (Pitman Publishing), Carlton, Victoria, 1978, Paperback, 40-60 pp., $1.95. Teacher's Guide.

There are twenty titles in this new series of "high-interest limited vocabulary stories designed for Australian secondary and technical students reading significantly below their grade and peer group level". Some of the titles are: *Three-K House*—a mystery set in the streets of Sydney; *The Verlaine Cross-*

ing—a story of espionage on board a train bound for Paris; *Crash Dive*—a story about a German U-boat and an Allied destroyer out to sink it; *Gypsy*—a story about a young bikie.

The stories are varied in setting and content, with plenty of action and interest. While books for reluctant readers, like this series, do seem to hold pupils' interest, the characters in them are, perhaps of necessity, fairly thinly drawn. I say this just so that teachers might be aware of the need to direct readers to more substantial literature at the appropriate time.

This series should compete well on a fast filling market. The books look close to adult in appearance. I think they would appeal to readers just below the *Topliners* level of interest and ability. The books are well worth considering. (See advertisement page 30.)

R.J.

Topliners (Macmillan), General Editor: Aidan Chambers, $1.65 each.

One of Barney's Girls by Tom Brown, 1977, 119 pp.

A very realistic story of a young girl starting her nursing career. In a short, interesting story the author manages to give a balanced insight into a nursing career. Jo Marshall has a lot of common sense and a capacity to learn from her new experiences. A well told, involving story which should appeal to readers looking for guidance in career choice.

All for Love compiled by John L. Foster, 1976, 128 pp.

This book offers nine varied stories on the theme of love. I found all the stories most enjoyable, and often quite thought-provoking. The first one in the book "The Crossroad" by Victoria Williams is particularly entertaining. The stories are short enough to be read aloud by the teacher for the pupils' enjoyment and as a stimulus to discussion. You might consider too, the earlier *Topliners* by John L. Foster—*That's Love* and *In Love, Out of Love*.

Future Love compiled by Victoria Williams, 1977, 125 pp.

In this science fiction anthology we have stories by Ray Bradbury, Jack Finney, Frank M. Robinson and others. The seven stories in the book offer different aspects of love in the future. I found them all interesting and at times, very thought-provoking. When science fiction writers describe human behaviour in some future time, it is often hard to believe they are only writing fiction! Josephine Saxton's story "The Wall" should keep the most restless class involved beyond the bell on Friday afternoon!

Sally Makes a Change by Jenny Hewitt, 1977, 121 pp.

Sally decides she has outgrown Chris, her boyfriend of long standing, and she starts going out with Steve, an older man, and a smooth operator. Chris is still unsophisticated. He is mad keen about his motor bike and has to suffer the consequences of an accident with it for which he is responsible. In different ways, both Sally and Chris learn to cope with new responsibilities and new relationships. This story falls into the category of "what growing up involves". Enjoyable, with plenty of points of identification for adolescents.

Nine Months by Philippa Adams, 1977, 111 pp.

This story is one you might class as a "realism" story. Karen is pregnant to a boy she barely even likes. Her parents are supportive though predictably bewildered by the situation they find themselves in. Karen decides she wants to have the baby and to keep it. *Nine Months* is the story of Karen's anxieties, feelings and experiences during the time of her pregnancy and afterwards. The story is credible, well balanced and, at times, poignant. Worth reading for the realistic insights it offers into a common human situation.

Summer Girl by Max Lundgren, 1971. Translated by Joan Tate, 1976, 125 pp.

Evy, the narrator of the story, is fourteen, independent, and unsure of herself in spite of her assertiveness. She's the kind of girl who seems almost afraid she will find that people can like her! She goes to the country (the story is set in Sweden) for a holiday as guest of a young couple whose only child is backward. Ann, the young wife, offers her an adult friendship such as she has not experienced before. And Janne, a young man living nearby becomes her boyfriend. A measure of suspense is added to the story when Evy and Janne become innocently involved in a local crime. I found that I was more interested in the various relationships Evy develops in the book, including her relationship with Peter the backward child. For the first time in reading a *Macmillan Topliner*, I found myself wishing the writer had gone into more detail about the characters. However, adolescents will probably find the book involving and easy to read.

East End at Your Feet by Farrukh Dhondy, 1976, 112 pp.

This collection of six stories about British and Asian teenagers living in the East End of London could offer Australian readers a new perspective on the problems of migrants. What came through very clearly to me was the variety of conflicts, challenges and difficult experiences the young people in the stories have to face. The stories are realistic without being depressingly so. Again, the stories could be read to pupils by the teacher. They could well be a safe starting point for migrant pupils to discuss and compare their own experiences.

R.A.

Who's Bill by Catherine Storr

The story centres around June Thompson, a young teenage girl, who although fat and plain, is extremely clever. June, shy of boys and not willing to show her true feelings for her friends and family, discovers that there is more to life than schoolwork. June learns how to express her feelings for others and discovers someone to care about and love. Bill, a stranger to the area, the well-endowed Maggie and simple Frances, her best friend each contribute to the development of June. Although the book is easy to read, interesting and probably well-suited to an audience of fifteen and sixteen-year-olds I feel it is unnecessary to include June's forthright views on sex. June's ideas seem to be presented as being morally right and acceptable and Frances' differing views as those of a rather immature and young girl. For a school age audience any such definite views on sex should be steered away from. Nor is it necessary to include the crude language used by June's parents in an argument. Language, like this,

does nothing for the book nor furthers the theme; in fact it can encourage young people to feel that such words are acceptable.

A.A.

Up The Road and Back by Joan Crompton

The novel, *Up The Road and Back*, is basically a story about the sexual exploits of a seventeen-year-old who goes on a holiday to Scotland with one aim in mind. Although he is portrayed as a fairly sensitive youth when compared to his friend Don, whose insatiable delight in "nooky" is definitely not suitable to be presented to a young teenage audience, I feel the emphasis on sex hinders his development as a character. Admittedly, the boy does learn from his experiences and gains a better understanding of what sex is about. However, I feel that there would have been a far better way to present this basic theme.

A.A.

Motocross by Royston Hooper

Motocross offers all the information a young bike-scrambler could ever wish to know. The author, Royston Hooper, is a well known scrambler. Every youngster interested in learning about the sport and its machines will find the book a gold-mine of information. Some of the topics dealt with are: how to enter schoolboy races; machinery; gear and techniques for riding. The author has kept the technical vocabulary to a minimum. As with most *Topliners* the book seeks to develop and maintain a high interest level, while at the same time seeking to encourage the reluctant reader.

Follow My Leader by Hans-Eric Hellberg, 1977.

Follow My Leader deals with the problems of the adolescent. The book's hero, Eric, finds himself becoming involved with a local gang which is set on seeking revenge for one of its members, Stan. However, the youths manage to find themselves moving from one conflict to another.

The novel is initially slow moving, although it begins to gather pace towards the middle.

Men at War compiled by Aidan Chambers

As the title suggests, *Men at War* is a compilation of short stories dealing with men at war. Nonetheless, there is variety in the subject matter of the stories. They deal with heroism, cowardice, prisoners of war, commandos and paratroopers. These stories are told by men who have experienced war at first hand. They recount their stories vividly and there is much in this volume to keep young readers interested.

J.R.

Dictionaries and Oral Work

A Dictionary of Australian Colloquialisms, by G. A. Wilkes (Sydney University Press), Sydney, 1978, xii + 370 pp., Hardback, $15.00.

This is the most exciting event in Australian lexicography for many years. For so long we have cried out for more information on the development of Australian English, and for too long students have needed a reference work which would explain the terms which keep cropping up in Australian interchanges and publications but which dictionaries produced overseas ignore. Professor Wilkes has made a valuable contribution and important step towards meeting our needs in this dictionary. What makes it all the more useful is the fact that so much of the material in it grew out of his own reading and contact with Australian English and the need to find explanations for terms used.

One's language is always fascinating and this publication brings to light so much to fascinate, enlighten and amuse. Here we find information not just on simple words (e.g. *fiddler*, *Matilda*, *lurk*, *sharkbaitor*, *(the) Sharks*, *ratbag*, *Yarrabanker*, and *drongo*) but also on phrases and proverbs (e.g. *over the fence*, *all over the place like a madwoman's custard*, *come the raw prawn*, *she'll be right*, and *go for the doctor*). Each item is clearly defined and supported by at least one quotation, though more often by two or three quotations from a variety of sources and from several periods in our history.

This is not a complete dictionary of Australian English. As its title honestly declares, its interest is restricted to colloquialisms, which Professor Wilkes defines as having their "existence in familiar speech rather than in the language of the printed page". He also recognises that the boundary between the two is not sharply defined and thankfully has interpreted the term *colloquialism* liberally, or at least has not been overly precise and has included rather than rejected when in doubt.

Nor is it complete with respect to colloquialisms. Each one of us no doubt could add an item here or there (e.g. *gems*, *hear footsteps*) query a definition and propose an expansion (e.g *Faugh-a-ballagh*) or wish that a variant spelling had been given its own entry (e.g *fog-a-bolla*, which is so different from *Faugh-a-ballagh*). But to perceive such matters as criticisms is to miss the point of the undertaking. This is one man's endeavour to get his findings down. It is open to the rest of us to build on this foundation until we have a complete dictionary of Australian English in all its facets. G. A. Wilkes joins E. E. Morris in giving us a good lead in the right direction.

The price of $15 may be a little high, but at least every library should have a copy.

R.D.E.

The Nelson Contemporary English Dictionary (Thomas Nelson), London, 1977, xiv + 670 pp., Paperback, $3.95.

This is a typical, uneventful dictionary intended, according to the editors, "to serve the needs of the foreign student learning the language as well as those

whose native language is English" (vii). It is workmanlike and on the whole reasonable. But it was produced in the U.K. and consequently the Australian component is restricted to the more obvious entries which have worldwide currency.

There are matters of detail which worry, such as the definitions of *motel*, *labial*, the inconsistencies in the treatment of *flat* and *apartment*, *reptile* and *snake*, the use of the labels *slang* and *colloquial* (see, for example, *ain't*, *drag in*, *aggravate*, *knock up* and *done*) and the persistence with a pseudo-pronunciation system so that the pronunciation *exchange* is represented as *ekschaynj*! Why lexicographers imagine IPA symbols are so difficult in the light of such monstrosities is difficult to fathom. There are illustrations, but as in most dictionaries, these are so random and so few that they serve more as a layout feature than a lexical help.

On the credit side, it is fairly up-to-date and would seem to have as good a coverage as any dictionary of this size. Irregular forms and difficult spellings of plurals, past tenses, etc., are given. There are appendices on foreign words and phrases (somewhat brief), common abbreviations, prefixes and suffixes. Also countries and their capitals!

The making of a dictionary is a difficult task. The problem for this one is that better ones designed for the Australian market are appearing.

R.D.E.

Talking in School, by Don Novick and Don Waters (Education Department of South Australia), 1977.

This impressive study, firmly based on contemporary approaches to language and learning, which it discusses informatively, aims "to present information which can help teachers, administrators, teacher educators and researchers do a better job of providing for the development of the oral language abilities of children aged 5 to 8".

The study used radio-microphones to record the speech of 770 English-speaking children in years 1 and 3 of schooling, for whom background and test data were obtained. Speech was recorded in interviews and a wide variety of school situations, including the playing of games especially designed to encourage the use of language to solve problems. The children's language is described and analysed for its communication functions and its uses of linguistic forms over this variety of situations and at the two age levels. The results confirm the assumption that language-use is dynamic—a matter of adaptation to varying circumstances—and not static, as folklore would have it in notions such as "correctness".

The fascinating findings, though too many and varied to be detailed here, are reported in readable English with responsible though not over-intrusive statistical treatment. The main broad finding is that concept development occupies the central role in language development, with "causes and effects" as follows:

The interaction of the factors is interestingly complex. For instance, while there are reliable performance-differences between age 5 and age 8, the variation *within* the age-groups is greater than *between* them. Availability of trusted adults is indicated by position in family, and in a sense emerges again in the finding that the children's talk in interview was more complex than in the classroom. The effect of socioeconomic status is by no means simple or universal, and the authors conclude that low IQ or "restricted code" do not really help explain why children of low socioeconomic status tend to do poorly at school. "The amount of adult support and the concepts acquired by the children seem to be much more relevant educational considerations."

It would seem from this as from other studies, that the typical classroom is not as responsive a language-learning environment as it would desirably be. Under pressure to keep discipline, respond to many voices and get tasks completed, teachers simply cannot provide the amount of "trusted-adult" response that is needed. The implications for the structure of schooling, including class sizes and the availability of teacher aides, would seem to be profound. Our society, which is so vocal in its demands *for* literacy needs to learn from sources such as this what the demands *of* literacy are, and how meagerly they are met by the old techniques of mass instruction.

Whether the reader makes this particular inference or not this volume deserves the serious attention of all the groups to whom it is addressed. It is one of the most important source-documents of Australian education ever to be produced, and is of a quality deserving world-wide recognition.

G.L.

Homo Loquens: Man as a Talking Animal, by Dennis Fry (Cambridge University Press), Cambridge, 1977, 177 pp., Paperback, 1.95 Sterling.

Aimed at the "intelligent layman" this book assumes no knowledge of its subject, human speech, on the part of the reader. It forms a comprehensive and witty introduction to a complex phenomenon with an emphasis on the role of the brain in the reception and processing of speech sounds and in their production. Every other point of view is brought to bear upon speech: the role of the tongue and other parts of the body in articulation; the development of speech in the normal person; phonemes; ways in which speech may go wrong. Some readers may be fascinated to ponder whether they are left-brained or right-brained on the basis of information they are given. Though most teachers would probably be familiar with most of the information in this book they may well find some sections helpful and informative and be attracted to a collection of

such basic information in a handy format. It may prove particularly useful as a reference for senior classes who are beginning to study speech in their work on language and who want a readable introduction to the important issues.

D.R.

The Grammatical Analysis of Language Disability, by D. Crystal, P. Fletcher and M. Garman (Edward Arnold), London, 1976, 231 pp., Paperback, (also in hard cover), $15.70.

This book is intended principally for speech therapists and other workers in the field of language disability, but it has features which I think will interest English teachers and teachers in special education. It certainly offers enough to warrant its inclusion in a professional collection. One may not wish to investigate closely their techniques of screening, assessment and remediation of language disorders (although it is easy to get interested in these matters), or to follow through their two case studies (one of a child, one of an adult), but chapters 1-4 are interesting and worthwhile: "The study of syntax", "Some critical factors in devising a syntactic remediation procedure", "The syntactic framework of description", and "The development of syntax in children". The book is immensely readable, and one finds here concise statements of theories and conclusions that might otherwise take months to track down.

Chapters 3 and 4 are worth the price of the book. "The syntactic framework . . ." provides a descriptive system such as every English teacher should know. A strong case can be made, too, for every English teacher to know something of language acquisition, and "The development of Syntax in children" will be found to be enlightening.

Highly recommended.

D.S.

Getting Across: A guide to good speaking and writing, by Maurice Brown (Edward Arnold Australia), Melbourne, 1978, 86 pp., Paperback, $4.00.

This hugely overpriced little book will be very useful for seminars at lower and middle management level, but not very useful for school purposes, even as a reference book.

"Different to" says Mr Brown, ". . . is one of the commonest errors in general use. Perhaps it will be accepted one day, and cease to be an error, but it certainly still upsets literate people."

"Anything we write is written-down talking" he says elsewhere. No.

D.S.

Prose

New in Paperback . . .

It has been a good year for paperbacks. While nothing has appeared to rival last year's **Z for Zachariah** (Armada Lion) as a novel for Year 9, some excellent titles have appeared for Years 7 and 8, and of course the launching of the Australian Puffin Club is an event of major importance. Any teacher who has not looked at the Club's magazine should do so without delay; there could be few better ways of stimulating reading than to ensure that one's class joined the Club. (Membership arranged through schools—a minimum of twenty members—costs $2 per member. Cheques should be sent to Pam Sheldrake, Puffin Club, 487 Maroondah Highway, Ringwood, Vic., 3134.) Each issue of the magazine contains stories, competitions and articles about books and writers.

The outstanding Puffin book for 1977-78 is **The Machine-Gunners** by Robert Westall ($1.75). This novel deservedly won the Carnegie Medal in 1975; it is a gripping story of Tyneside children during the Blitz. I should be inclined to use it as a class novel in Year 8, but others may prefer to use it in Year 7. Also from Puffin comes **No Man's Land** by Simon Watson ($1.75), which provides a convincing picture of a society in the near future where freedom has been eroded to the extent that people are compulsorily placed in welfare homes when they reach sixty-five and the country's planners can arbitrarily decide to raze a village and re-house its population in "a new concept in town living"—a gigantic unit housing over three thousand people. Alan, the young protagonist, rejects the dehumanising atmosphere of the complex, and is sent to a "re-education centre". For Year 8 or possibly Year 9.

Somehow overlooked last year was M. E. Kerr's **Dinky Hocker Shoots Smack!** (Puffin, $1.50). While the note inside the cover says that the book is "for readers of 12 and over", I should like to use it in Year 9 in the first half of the year. It is a wise and witty book, with the verve of Zindel but with a good deal more humanity. Dinky Hocker's parents are so obsessed with their role as do-gooders with the city's drug addicts that they fail to observe the desperate unhappiness of their over-weight daughter.

Penguin Books have revamped the Peacock series, issuing some new titles and adding others, like *Catcher in the Rye*, that were previously in the adult list. Presumably this is the reason why two titles that might have been expected to appear as Peacocks have been issued as Puffins. Surely Leon Garfield's **The Sound of Coaches** ($1.75) is a book for Years 9 and 10; it is more demanding than *Smith* and the pace is more leisurely. It would seem a splendid novel for Year 9, unless you happen to be teaching in Queensland, where objections might be raised to some of the language:

> She dabbed at her eyes with a corner of her sleeve. She *must* make a good impression. 'Pray excuse me complexion', she said; then sniffed genteelly. "But as they say, the more you cry the less you piss, sir."

Bette Greene's **Summer of My German Soldier** (Puffin, $1.75), an unusual and moving story set in wartime U.S.A., is probably better suited to readers of

fourteen and upwards than to those for whom Puffin books are usually intended. It should prove very popular with Year 9 girls.

Before the new Peacock Books are discussed, mention must be made of a new Piccolo title and two new books in Armada Lions. The Piccolo book is Mollie Hunter's **The Stronghold** ($1.50), which won the 1974 Carnegie Medal. It is a powerful historical novel set in the Orkney Islands in the time when Roman raiding ships came searching for slaves, and the story revolves round the building of those strange stone towers called brochs. For able readers in Years 8 and 9.

The two Armada Lion titles are Judith Kerr's **The Other Way Round** ($1.95), the sequel to her very successful *When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit*, and S. E. Hinton's **Rumble Fish** ($1.50). *The Other Way Round* is the story of German Jewish refugees in wartime Britain, and of Anna, the heroine of *When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit*, in her adolescent years. For Years 8 and 9. *Rumble Fish* arrived too late for detailed review, but a quick skim-read suggests that it has all the qualities that made the author's *The Outsiders* and *That Was Then, This is Now* so popular with adolescents not normally inclined to read. For Year 10, particularly the not-so-able readers.

As already mentioned, the new Peacock list contains Salinger's **Catcher in the Rye**. It also includes two well-known novels by John Rowe Townsend, **The Intruder** and **Goodnight, Prof, Love** (both $1.75). The latter caused quite a stir when first published, for it was one of the first books on a children's list to break Newbery's First Law—"Keep off sex". Eight years later, in the wake of Zindel and Blume, it seems rather tame, but it is a craftsmanlike story which should be included in wide reading programmes in Years 9 and 10. Rather better, I think, and worth considering for class study, is *The Intruder*, which contains some very subtle characterisation and explores themes of personal identity and the relationship between appearance and reality.

Two other Peacocks are John Gordon's **The Ghost on the Hill** and Charles Portis's **True Grit** (both $1.50). *True Grit*, which was made into a very successful film, could provide teachers with some very useful material for language study: the heroine is looking back at events fifty years earlier and some interesting discussion could develop from a study of the ways in which the author keeps in front of the reader the fact that it is an old woman who is telling the story of the adventures of a fourteen-year-old. Despite some slow sections, this would be a good novel for an able Year 9 class, and although the central character is a girl there is plenty in the book to appeal to boys. John Gordon's *The Ghost on the Hill* is in some ways less demanding, but in other ways more subtle. Outwardly a ghost story, it is a powerful delineation of some basic human emotions: love, hate, guilt, snobbery. For Year 10.

K.W.

The Seeds of Time, by John Wyndham (Wheaton/Pergamon Australia), 1977, Soft cover, 155 pp., $3.00.

This is a collection of ten short stories in the science fiction genre. There is an

interesting introduction by the author which tells us a little of each story's genesis, as well as "placing" each in a loose category or style of writing.

Some of the stories go back some time. The earliest, "*Meteor*" was written pre-war. This collection was first published in 1956. I mention this because I feel some problems might arise for young readers in the 70's who are familiar with the space probes to Mars and Venus, especially when reading *Time to Rest* where the protagonist, Bert, is one of a group from Earth, living on Mars and plying his newly developed skills as a tinker.

The stories are well written, with ingenious developments, quite a degree of suspense and irony, and nice touches of humour. Given the continuing interest of a significant number of kids in science fiction (witness the success of *Star Wars*, *Close Encounters* etc.) this anthology should prove a useful resource in a number of ways in English work, not the least being sheer pleasure in reading.

M.P.

Poetry

Second Thoughts, by Ron Johnson and Jann Johnson (John Wiley), Sydney, 1977, 91 pp., Paperback, $4.50.

If you have seen Ron Johnson and Jann Johnson's anthology *Stolen Moments* for Years 7 and 8 (reviewed in AATE Guide to English Books 1977) you will be particularly interested in their companion anthology *Second Thoughts* for Years 9 and 10. Together the two books could provide pupils with a comprehensive experience in reading, writing and enjoying poetry if teachers use the books in the ways suggested in the introduction and throughout.

The special emphasis in *Second Thoughts* is on "establishing the valuable link between personal, creative writing and literary appreciation" (Introduction). Ron Johnson says, elsewhere, "This approach is based on the assumption that if you have experienced, through personal writing, the struggle to give conscious shape and order to thoughts and feelings, you are in some way involved in the art form and therefore are more likely to be sympathetic and responsive to the artistic achievements of those more gifted than yourself. . . . My objection to using the literary criticism approach in a junior class is that there is just not time to genuinely develop a line of thinking that a child has come upon in his reading of a poem" ("Teaching Poetry—One Approach" in E.T.A. (NSW) Newsletter, Nov. 1977, p. 21).

Second Thoughts has an integrated structure underlying the diversity of poetry forms and activity suggestions it offers. You could plan a solid core of work in English based on the reading, writing and speaking which can arise from the poetry and ideas in this book. In a subtle and important way, *Second Thoughts* covers the spectrum from the approach which sees poetry as fun, to the approach which sees it as a means of expanding pupils' emotional and intellectual experiences. It is the kind of book which could enlighten teachers who feel their own approach to poetry in the classroom needs revitalising.

Some student teachers have been using both *Stolen Moments* and *Second Thoughts* because they wanted to try creative approaches to poetry reading and writing with their pupils. They have reported enthusiastically on the rewarding written and oral work their pupils have done as a result of working with the books. If you want your pupils at any stage in secondary school to experience the pleasure of reading, writing and discussing poetry in more than a haphazard, fragmented way, have a close look at *Second Thoughts* (and *Stolen Moments*). For its content, illustrations and underlying philosophy *Second Thoughts* is highly recommended.

R.A.

Over My Shoulder, by Susan Groundwater-Smith, Illustrations by Tanja Nieminerv, Photography by Lance Nelson (Rigby), 1977, Paperback, 148 pp., $7.50. (Reprinted by permission from E.T.A. (NSW) Newsletter, November 1977.)

These days when children are used to ..phisticated and attractive printing

techniques in their school books, poetry anthologies often have to make an immediate visual impact to attract attention, especially in the junior years. *Over My Shoulder* meets that criterion with one of the most appealing front covers I have seen on an anthology. The art work and photography inside maintain that standard.

The aim of the book is to present poetry in a positive way as something vital and relevant to young people. All too often children pick up the message that poetry is "precious" and remote from them. *Over My Shoulder* should dispel that unfortunate impression.

The poems in *Over My Shoulder* have been selected from traditional sources, children's own writing and popular song lyrics. Activities have been suggested which would allow the readers of the poems to develop ideas and attitudes generated by their reading. In this way, poetry could become the heart of a language programme from which other language activities could grow. Have a good look at this poetry book if you want an attractive, lively anthology for junior classes.

R.A.

Youth Writes No. 6, ed. Marcia Kirsten (Reed Education), Terrey Hills, NSW, 1977, 95 pp., Paperback, $6.95 (Cased), $3.95 (Limp cover).

For ten years now the Youth Writes Fellowship has been publishing the Youth Writes collections, giving Australian adolescents the all-too-rare opportunity to be read and valued. For ten years too, reviewers have been commenting on the quality of the contributions in *Youth Writes*, stemming from the writers' depth of perception and skill in working with language forms.

Youth *can* write. *Youth Writes No. 6* offers ample evidence of that. What better stimulus to pupils' writing can teachers offer their classes than the voices of their peers? Sometimes the ability to write is a gift. Often it can be stimulated in children by chance encounters with certain experiences. *Youth Writes No. 6*, and its predecessors offer that kind of stimulating experience. Many established poets could be surprised and inspired by the artistic merits of the young poets and writers contributing to these volumes. So could many teachers and pupils. *Youth Writes No. 6* deserves top priority on book-order lists.

R.A.

Jagardoo, by Jack Davis (Methuen of Australia), Sydney, 1978, 52 pp., Paperback, $4.95.

Jack Davis is an Aboriginal poet who has become well known as a writer and as editor of the Aboriginal journal *Identity*. His book of verse *The First Born* was published in Sydney in 1970.

I came to this collection expecting, unfairly, poems of bitterness and invective—poems which might make me feel guilty about white man's treatment of the Aboriginals. I found poems of compassion, dignity and deceptive simplicity. The integrity of man, be he black or white, is asserted in the poems of this book.

Judith Wright says in her introduction to this collection, "the surprising thing about this book is not its expression of dispossession and injustice, but in its refusal of any final bitterness and violence . . . the book becomes a plea, rather than a threat; an assertion of humanity rather than a curse or a baring of teeth . . . Jack Davis's poems will take a high place in the slowly growing body of Aboriginal literature in English".

I can add little to such apt comments except to say that school libraries, at least, should have a copy of this collection. English teachers might well consider *Jagardoo* when they revise their class text lists. It could balance the content of a unit of work on Australian literature, and it deserves attention in its own right. Aboriginal literature is growing slowly and we should be alerting pupils to its growth and its voice. Harold Thomas, an Aboriginal painter has illustrated this book with graceful, sometimes stark, black and white sketches. The book is attractive in appearance and offers quality in its content.

R.A.

Pleasure and Repentance, compiled and directed by Terry Hands (A. Wheaton and Co.), Great Britain, 1976, Paperback, $3.00.

The immediate inspiration for *Pleasure and Repentance, A lighthearted look at love as performed by the Royal Shakespeare Company*, was the anthology of the Kings and Queens of England: *The Hollow Crown*. The programme, *Pleasure and Repentance*, first performed in 1967, has since been seen in many countries. Terry Hands claims it is an attempt "in contemporary terms to re-create the ancient art of the story-teller", to create for today's audience something of the same experience felt by those listening to the old minstrels and story-tellers. The performance requires no special scenery, props, or costume; everything depends on the word, how it is delivered, how it is received. There are four performers, the man and the woman, the older man, and the singer/guitarist; there are notes for stage movement and suggestions for delivery of lines.

The story itself is straightforward. From the prologue question: "Now what is love I pray thee tell", the items are arranged under ten chapters: *Part One*: Childhood, Wooing, Frustration, The Brink of Matrimony, The Enjoyment of Love; *Part Two*: Marriage, Three Fatal Ballads, Disillusionment, Last Confessions, Epilogue.

Sir Walter Raleigh's "A Description of Love" forms both Prologue and Epilogue. The items are chosen to follow the ambiguity and paradox of the first description:

> "It is that fountain and that well
> Where pleasure and repentance dwell"

They are chosen too, for their dramatic impact, and range from *The Book of Genesis* to modern lyrics. Something of the emotional impact of the performance itself is brought to the reader through the items and accompanying notes, and I am sure many teachers will find material here to read with students for their shared delight.

M.I.A.

Drama

Dramakit, by John Seeley (O.U.P.), 1977, looseleaf format, ring-binder, 194 pp., A4 size, $18.50.

A: Houston, do you read?

B: Roger, Apollo, Go ahead.

C: We have a problem here . . .

This is by way of a sample from the many, many starting points for drama offered in *Dramakit*. Actually it's not so much a kit (in the sense of a collection of A-V and print materials) as a remarkably flexible and imaginative set of "drama-sheets" put into a ring binder, along with sound practical help and advice for the teacher. There is no restriction on copying the material, so every pupil can have the right material for the lesson at minimal expense.

For beginners, use the "Scenemakers" section, for more experienced classes choose "Predicaments", for students with some self-sufficiency, choose the "Groupwork" section and, for really experienced groups, begin on one of the projects in the Playkits section—Noah's Flood, Harlequin or Island. These lead students into an appreciation of medieval drama, commedia dell'arte and the problem play respectively. In short, there's something here for everyone—from Grades 7-12.

The teacher of English will be particularly interested in Seeley's linguistics-based approach to drama. The idea is that through close attention to the components of a dramatic situation, one can produce certain kinds of language and paralinguistic behaviour appropriate to that situation. When language study becomes a matter of analysing the effectiveness of people's word choices, structures, voice-tones and so on, it can be very entertaining and informative. The Seeley drama-teaching technique is based on linguistic theory as readers of his 1976 book, *In Context*, will know. So the improvisations in *Dramakit* lend themselves readily to language-study. Literature too can be imaginatively explored and/or recreated through drama as we all know: and the "Predicaments" section of *Dramakit* makes clear a number of techniques for doing this sort of work. For example, passages from *Walkabout* and *Elidor* are chosen as starting points for group improvisation. Theme teaching devotees will find eighteen favourite topics from "adolescence" to "the supernatural" well covered by the *Dramakit* suggestions. There's a list of themes with cross-references, too.

So really, apart from the price, there's no excuse for not getting a copy. And even then the kit is a fairly economic proposition if you consider the wide range of its application and the ease of making photocopies of individual lesson materials. Apart from its four major sections, *Dramakit* contains a list of drama games suitable for "warm-ups", ideas for music to set appropriate moods and suggestions for follow-up written work where a lesson warrants it. If there is a drawback it's the inevitable one that some of the locales for improvisation are rather too British, and some of the roles too. But really, this is a minor criticism. All that is needed is a little adaptation.

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G.D.

Springboards: Ideas for Drama, by Joan Miller (Thomas Nelson), Australia, 1977, Paperback, 100 pp., $6.50.

The author calls this "a pure ideas book" and I think, as such it will be of tremendous interest to teachers who constantly need new ideas for drama lessons. The book is divided into sections titled "Sea", "Machine", "Circus and Zoo", "Witches and Ghosts", "Flight", "Pioneering Days". Obviously the emphasis is on work in primary school but there is no reason why the activities could not be adapted for junior secondary classes. In each thematic unit there are suggestions for movement and mime activities, listening, looking, tasting, touching and smelling activities. The activities can be done in groups of various sizes, with partners and individually. There is enough information given for the teacher to be able to start the pupils purposefully into the activity without inhibiting the outcome.

Joan Miller has obviously distilled into the ideas presented here, the best principles of child drama philosophy, and tested them in her work with children. A drama teacher can never have too many books of ideas. "*Springboards*" offers both ideas and a sound theoretical framework for child drama work.

R.A.

Action Pack—48 cards for Drama, by Sue Porter (Edward Arnold), Great Britain, 1976, $11.60.

These cards are designed to act as a stimulus to drama especially for children aged 9-14. They are planned for groups of 2, 3 and 4 and are arranged in degrees of difficulty. The cards are suitable for boys, girls and mixed groups. They have a clear line drawing on the front and a brief description of a situation underneath. On the back there are suggestions for ways of developing the situation and the characters involved. Pupils are encouraged to use the cards as starting points for discussion, improvisation and writing.

The principle value of cards like these is that they provide teachers and pupils with ideas they might not have thought of themselves. If they give beginning teachers of drama confidence to start then they are worth the money. But I would strongly recommend that they be used with substantial back-up from the teacher and follow-up sessions of pupil evaluation of their drama activities. All too often cards and other resources become a substitute for preparation, involvement and careful evaluation.

I like the style and simplicity of these cards and the suitability of the situations outlined in them.

R.A.

Knowing in My Bones, by Ruth Foster (Adam and Charles Black), London, 1976, 131 pp., Paperback, $4.50.

The emphasis in this book is on the nature and value of movement and dance in children's learning. The author, described as "a pioneer in movement education", acknowledges the influence of Rudolf Laban on this book and on the development of movement as a learning experience. The subject of the book is an "exploration of modes of movement, the nature of their expressive quality and consequent influence on the inner life of feeling". If that sounds fairly heavy and academic, be assured the book is lively and extremely interesting.

The text discusses the principles of movement, dance and drama juxtaposed with personal accounts from teachers and dancers of their experiences in this field. There are brief but informative discussions on the influence of attitude ("That which we know in our bones is part of the very fabric of our being; in our attitudes we unconsciously reveal something of this to the world"), culture, and ritual on the development of movement and dance. The needs of children in the primary and secondary stage are outlined as are the place of touch, speech, sound and interaction in expressive development.

Sir Alec Clegg in his Preface calls the book "scholarly and profound". It is all that, and extremely readable too. I recommend it to teachers seeking inspiration on the role of movement and dance in drama education.

R.A.

The New Life, by Mary Gage and **The Foreman**, by Jill Shearer. Currency Double Bill. General Editor, Frank Bladwell (The Currency Press), Woollahra, NSW, 83 pp., Paperback, $2.95.

In *The New Life*, Betty, an English migrant from a large urban English family, lives with her husband William in their home in Perth. Their house is ordinary, they are ordinary, and life for Betty is depressingly ordinary. Her main source of stimulation is to listen to Johnnie, a radio disc jockey, and to imagine that she has a worthwhile friendship with him. William tries, ineffectually, to help Betty assimilate to life in Australia and suggests that she develop a friendship with Sylvia, their neighbour. That attempt fails and Betty feels even more alienated.

The New Life is not the kind of play which shows great ranges of human feeling. It is a play which manages to be absorbing by showing everyday people struggling to maintain some kind of emotional equilibrium. Certainly, Betty's situation is sad, but I wonder if this *is* the result of her situation as a migrant. It seems to me that she does not really have it in her to make much of her life anywhere. Perhaps this makes her story even more poignant. I can imagine a senior English class finding plenty to involve them in this short play.

The Foreman, in a different way shows what it is like to be an outsider. Joe, an Aboriginal, is a hard worker and deserves his promotion to foreman. Just as he expected, the promotion is a dubious blessing. His workmates cannot accept his colour and his new position. Not that anyone does anything really vindictive to him or to his family, but the tension is there ready to surface at the slightest provocation. There is nothing harsh or brutal about the situation presented in the play, just the nagging reality of a family coping with the problems of being different.

This volume of two plays offers also an extract from a talk by Alan Walker about British migrants in Australia, and a piece about Aborigines in a white society. I find this kind of material far more useful for classroom use than teachers' lists of questions.

Currency Press continues to offer teachers and others, scripts of quality and interest.

R.A.

Catherine, by Jill Shearer and **Cass Butcher Bunting**, by Bill Reed (Edward Arnold), Monash New Plays Series, Melbourne, 1977, Paperback, $3.50

These are the first two plays in the Monash New Plays series which aims to publish new plays by Australian playwrights. They are a welcome venture.

The plays are printed in uncluttered, large-print fashion on good quality paper. This, in itself, lends them to school use. Each has a useful introduction by general editor Mary Lord and is of two acts. Neither is too long to be manageable in schools.

Catherine (83 pp.) is a play about the ship-board relationship between Catherine Crowley, a convict, and D'Arcy Wentworth, ship's surgeon on the Second Fleet ship "Neptune". It is told within the framework of a modern rehearsal for Catherine and this provides an effective mechanism to distance an audience from the inner play to examine its main characters. The play entertains as it recreates an interesting moment of Australia's early history. It is suitable for school use, especially in Years 9-11.

Cass Butcher Bunting (70 pp.) begins with an explosion and a cave-in down a mine shaft. Three miners are trapped there (Cass, Butcher and Bunting) and the play explores their reactions to the disaster. As it does so, it also examines their treatment of each other in sometimes ruthless fashion. The play has plenty to recommend it. Perhaps it is the less suitable of the two for production in schools but it could certainly promote lots of discussion about the human condition amongst receptive students.

J.W.

Problem Plays, by Ann Farquhar-Smith (Hulton Educational), Great Britain, 1977, 120 pp., Paperback, $3.75.

If you are looking for short interesting plays for Years 7 and 8, you might consider this collection.

The plays deal with situations involving shoplifting, flat-sharing, marrying young, applying for a job and buying a new car. There are nine very brief plays in the book and questions for discussion and other activities following each play. Many of the situations could be used as starting points for improvisations. The scripts could be changed and played in a variety of ways too.

I think a class set of this book could be useful for junior years where there is a dearth of relevant, brief plays suitable for presentation in a period or two. These plays could help bridge the gap between improvisation and following a script.

You might even encourage pupils to start writing their own short plays modelled on the ones offered here.

R.A.

Five Plays for Stage, Radio, and Television, ed. Alrene Sykes (University of Queensland Press), St. Lucia, Queensland, 1977, 179 pp., Cloth $11.00, Paperback $5.95.

The five plays in this Portable Australian Authors series are: Louis Esson's *The Drovers*, Alan Seymour's *The One Day of the Year*, David Williamson's *What if You Died Tomorrow*, Douglas Stewart's *The Golden Lover*, Ted Robert's *Lindsay's Boy*. The stated aim of this series is to "meet a need not hitherto met by any single book". What this particular book offers is, I think, an introduction to a range of Australian drama themes in an historical context. From the point of view of teachers looking for new material to use in classrooms, Ted Robert's *Lindsay's Boy* offers scope for classroom improvisation and discussion (the play is set in Sydney in the 1940's but the theme of a clash in values between father and son is universal, and sensitively handled in the play) and I can imagine a class keen on film making using this television play for filming purposes. *Lindsay's Boy* was awarded an Awgie, as "Best Original Television Drama, 1975". It is not hard to work out why.

This book also offers a valuable introduction "Australian Drama Since 1920"; reprints of letters from Louis Esson to Vance Palmer; reprints of interviews with David Williamson; comments by Ted Roberts on writing for television and other useful background material. Consider a library copy at least.

R.A.

Inner Voices, by Louis Nowra (Currency Press), Woollahra, N.S.W., 1977, 98 pp., Paperback, $3.95.

Louis Nowra is one of the new voices in Australian drama writing and John Bell, in his Introduction to this Currency Press edition, calls that voice "bold, individual and quite self-absorbed". And of the play *Inner Voices*, Bell (who directed the play's first production at Sydney's Nimrod Theatre in 1977) says, "it is one of those few Australian plays which could be performed and understood in any country, in any language . . . Despite this international flexibility, it was written in Australia and in an Australian idiom which is deliberate, unmistakeable and entirely appropriate".

There is so much one could say about this play—its idiosyncratic language, its range of emotions, its compassion, humour, depth and variety—all call for close analysis. Louis Nowra says in his Author's Preface, "*Inner Voices* is neither a play which invites historical comment nor an historical epic. It is simply a play about the title, a play which shows a mind under such intense pressure that knowledge and a vision of the world is warped into a personal hell". That comment gives some indication of the spirit of the play. The action of the play centres on a speechless boy, Ivan, who is subjected to harrowing social and personal pressures.

What does *Inner Voices* offer the classroom teacher? It is a difficult but rewarding play. I'd like to bring it to the attention of able senior classes. Hopefully, it will find its way on to appropriate syllabus lists, along with some other Currency Press titles. An Australian play with the richness, sophistication and subtlety which *Inner Voices* offers, and much more besides, deserves our serious attention.

R.A.

Upstaged—one-act plays for schools, ed. by Stephen Wedlick (Rigby), 1977, 81 pp., $3.50.

This anthology of five plays is of interest to any teacher looking for plays with an Australian setting. Two of them deal with an historical setting: *Women of Parramatta* is a very short play about female convicts; *Fool's Gold* an interesting melodrama set in the goldfields of Gippsland. *170 c.c.* (student-parent conflict) and *Cupid in Transit Two* (boy-girl relationship) have modern settings. *The Final Choice* is a futuristic play dealing with man's struggle against domination by machines.

Each play is accompanied by a brief commentary, a set of questions and a series of writing suggestions designed to build on the drama experience.

The plays are not dauntingly long for class study and should be positive encouragement for teachers and students to engage in some practical drama. For it is here that the value of the collection lies. The dialogue gives plenty of scope for the "actor" and "director" to use their own ideas and skills to interpret the drama for the classroom or stage.

D.E.

Summer of the Seventeenth Doll, by Ray Lawler (Currency Press), Woollahra, N.S.W., 1978, 96 pp., Paperback, $2.95.

Why a Currency Press edition of a play which was first published in 1957? For one thing, the author has revised the play in the context of its two companion pieces *Kid Stakes* and *Other Times*, commissioned in 1975-76 by the Melbourne Theatre Company. But perhaps more importantly, *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* has stood the test of time. A history of modern Australian drama would be incomplete if it lacked reference to this play. Furthermore, this edition of *The Doll* offers a succinct, late 1970's perspective on the play in Katherine Brisbane's introduction. Read it to find out why she calls *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, "a great play". This edition also offers a chapter of critics' comments on the play in the theatre, some interesting photos of the play in production, and a delightful reproduction of a George Molnar piece—sketches and comments relating to the play—which appeared in the Sydney Morning Herald in 1956. At $2.95 libraries at least should have a copy of this edition.

R.A.

For review of **Life Pieces**, see **Stop Press** p. 63.

Mass Media

Zoom In: Television Scripts of the Seventies, ed. D. Reid and F. De Groen (Macmillan), 1977, 206 pp., Paperback, $5.95.

Don Reid's collections of Australian TV scripts (see also *Close Up, In Focus*) are becoming a staple feature of the industry. And a good thing too, since they give some permanence to what is for the most part so ephemeral. By far the largest proportion of drama seen by Australians is televised: only 1% regularly go to the theatre. So it is vitally important for teachers and students to have access to TV scripts for the purposes of criticism, comparison, discussion, rewriting and just plain acting out. And TV being what it is, the more recent the scripts, the better.

This third collection of scripts is recent and it has a nice variety. An episode from *Rush*, another from *Luke's Kingdom*, and one from *No. 96* make up the fiction side of it. The documentary side (a welcome addition) is represented by two *Big Country* scripts, one from *The Inventors* featuring the Sarich engine, a *Monday Conference* with Margaret Mead and some representative snippets of the *ABC News*. Each script has an introduction and some good follow-up questions. What emerges is interesting. First, there is the unmistakeable impression that all of these TV scripts are primarily entertainments—even the ABC news. I don't mean to be disparaging: this is the way it is. Of course, the secondary purposes vary—from social engineering in the case of *A Big Country* to selling soap powders etc., in the case of *No. 96* (why, by the way, is the latter far more successful than the former?). Then there's the strong feeling of admiration for scriptwriters who can in one instance manage to wring the very last ounce of interest out of the *thousandth* episode of *No. 96*, and in others understate so beautifully the dramas of the pioneering life in the two historical scripts. Compare these with your average TV Western and you'll be pleasantly surprised at the quality of Australian scriptwriting.

Lastly it should be shouted from the roof tops that there's more material here for language study than in a thousand grammar lessons. To take the *Monday Conference* script alone one might well discuss such questions as these. Why are Margaret Mead's answers so convincing? How does Robert Moore avoid seeming to be biased? Why do some questioners sound effective, others ineffective? How do you handle the embarrassing question if you are a public figure? And one for finishing off. Why is it that the *ABC News* script manages to sound just like the one I heard last night?

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G.D.

The Projected Muse—Extracts from Six Australian Film Scripts. Compiled by Peter McFarlane (Rigby), Adelaide, 1977, 133 pp., Paperback, $4.95.

This is a well-presented book, likely to appeal to students at Secondary level. There are extracts from the scripts of "Picnic at Hanging Rock", "Caddie",

"Storm Boy", "The Devil's Playground", "The Fourth Wish", and "The Cars That Ate Paris", illustrated by stills. There is also a profile of each scriptwriter.

A short glossary of technical terms precedes the scripts. At the end of the book there are reviews of "Caddie" and "The Devil's Playground" (why not the others?), and a most interesting short article by Colin Thiele, "Shall We Make a Film of Your Book?".

Mr McFarlane suggests that "the screenplays can be used in any number of ways. They . . . can be read aloud in class. They lend themselves to the discussion of some important themes . . . and they have all kinds of 'spin-offs' into other subject areas and extension activities". I suspect, though, that their main value will be as film scripts, and I agree with Mr McFarlane that ". . . perhaps the most enjoyable and effective thing (students) can do is visit the cinema to see the films from which these extracts were taken".

A set of 20 books will be enough for class work.

D.S.

The World Moves Slowly—A Documentary History of Australian Women, by Beverley Kingston (Cassell Australia), 1977, 202 pp., Soft back, $7.95.

This book, which is a collection of documents about women in Australian history, spanning our history from 1795 to the twentieth century, belongs more appropriately perhaps in a guide to history text sources.

However, it does provide a wealth of very interesting material about women and therefore about Australian social history. Since good sources of non-fiction materials are often hard to find, it is worth recording that this book provides good reading and might well be used in the middle years of schooling—say Years 10 and 11.

F.C.

Reflections of Reality. . . . The Media in Australia, by Trevor Barr (Rigby), Adelaide, 1977, 240 pp., Paperback, $9.95.

A good reference book for the faculty library and the school library. The book provides a comprehensive survey of the Australian mass media, and will supersede books whose information may now be dated. There are eight chapters: "Media and Society", "Media Freedom and Governments", "Media Ownership and Control", "The Press", "Television", "Radio", "Advertising", and "Film". There are also twenty suggested assignments.

Recommended.

D.S.

The Writer's Approach to the TV/Film Script, by Rodney Bennett (Harrap), London, 1976, (Australasian Publishing Co.), Hornsby, N.S.W., 49 pp., Paperback, $3.50.

This book is one of a series (e.g. "The Writer's Approach to The Novel", . . . "The Ballad", . . . "The Short Story"). Mr Bennett's field is television; he says in

the Introduction, "... when I'm talking about film work, I'm referring to film as it's used in television and not for the cinema".

It is a very readable book which stresses the teamwork of TV production. It is well presented and well illustrated. Its English bias may not appeal to some students, but that problem should be overcome fairly early. Contents include: "Who is the Scriptwriter?", "Film v Television", "Writing for Speech", "Words and Pictures", "The Shape of Drama", and "Dialogue" and "The Film of the Book".

Perhaps not a class set—but a couple of copies to build up your collection of books on film and television, and to give students for use in small group work.

D.S.

On Children's Literature

The Cool Web, ed. Margaret Meek, Aidan Warlow and Griselda Barton (Bodley Head), London, 1977, 427 pp., Cased, $18.50;

Good Writers for Young Readers, ed. Dennis Butts (Hart Davis), St Albans, 1977, 144 pp., Paperback, $10.50;

Children and Their Books, by Frank Whitehead, A. C. Capey, Wendy Maddren and Alan Wellings (Macmillan), London, 1977, 335 pp., Cased, $25.95;

Writers Alive!, by Maxine Walker (Westbooks), Perth, 1977, 112 pp., Paperback, $5.95;

Children's Books of the Year '76, by Elaine Moss (Hamish Hamilton), London, 1977, 144 pp., Paperback, $5.60.

A whole industry is developing around children's literature, as the books listed above testify. If only all this effort carried across into the secondary classroom! Unfortunately, there is some evidence to suggest that only a relatively small amount of time is given in the classroom to the activity of reading; pupils spend about 65% of their time in talking and listening (mainly the latter, and mainly listening to the teacher) and about 20% of their time in writing. It is vitally important that teachers realise the value of giving more time to reading, and having made that discovery, to ensure that they bring the best possible books to the notice of their pupils.

That teachers are failing in their task of bringing pupil and book together is evidenced from *Children and their Books*, the Schools Council research study which was previously the subject of an interim report, *Children's Reading Interests* (reviewed in the 1975 *Guide*). If there is one thing that comes through clearly from the data on children's reading habits displayed here, it is that most children are not acquainted with such writers as Garfield, Garner, Boston, Aiken, Pearce. As often as not, the reason probably lies in the fact that the teachers themselves are unacquainted with the best in children's literature. And herein lies the value of *Good Writers for Young Readers*, *Writers Alive!* and *Children's Books of the Year*. They help the hard-pressed teacher to choose wisely.

Good Writers for Young Readers is a collection of essays, mainly reprinted from the journal *The Use of English*. Like all such collections, it varies in quality: there are stimulating articles on William Mayne, Leon Garfield, Russell Hoban, Lucy Boston, and rather disappointing ones on Alan Garner and Rosemary Sutcliff. The ever-controversial Fred Inglis contributes a provocative essay entitled "Spellbinding and Anthropology: The Work of Richard Adams and Ursula LeGuin". In all, it is a worthwhile volume; it is a pity that it is so dear.

In *Writers Alive!* Maxine Walker offers short essays on thirteen Australian writers: Brinsmead, Buddee, Clark, Fatchen, Mattingley, Norman, Ottley, Park, Phipson, Southall, Spence, Thiele, Wrightson. While her comments on some of the lesser writers in this list are sometimes over-generous, she is not afraid to draw attention to the flaws in the work of the more eminent figures. In other

words, this little book is not simply an attempt to publicise Australian writers; it offers balanced criticism as well.

Elaine Moss's annual review of the best books for children is too well known to need much comment here. Her judgment is for the most part unerring; her only fault is that she tends (like whoever annotates the Puffin books) to think always in terms of the ablest and most mature readers when attaching age levels to books.

I'm inclined to nominate *The Cool Web* as my Book of the Year. It is well produced, admirably edited, always challenging. Sub-titled "The Pattern of Children's Reading", it is divided into four sections: "The reader", "What the authors tell us", "Approaches to criticism", "Ways forward". Of the four, the first is perhaps the most interesting, since it concerns aspects of reading that are too rarely discussed. How do stories operate for children? How does literary taste develop? What can we learn of children's affective development from their response to stories? These are some of the questions explored by writers like James Britton, C.S. Lewis and Elaine Moss. Then follows a section in which writers for children look at their craft—and their audience. In this part of the book we hear from Joan Aiken, Geoffrey Trease, Jill Paton Walsh, Alan Garner, Lucy Boston, Maurice Sendak, among others. Section Three examines the various approaches to criticism today, and Section Four looks at some of the directions in which children's literature is going. In the introduction to this last section, the editors offer the salutory reminder of the danger that, as the children's literature industry expands, "the child curled up in an armchair with his Jennings book will be forgotten". This danger *The Cool Web* admirably avoids. And so does the Schools Council study. The most valuable parts of *Children and Their Books*, at least for those who read the interim report and are thus aware of the main findings, are the follow-up interviews with child readers and the discussion of the books children prefer. Buy *The Cool Web* (never mind about the price; it's well worth it), borrow *Children and Their Books* from a library and reflect upon the significance of its findings for you; make sure that the other three books are available in your school for easy reference by all English teachers.

K.W.

E.T.A.(N.S.W.) has just published a booklet **Aspects of Children's Literature**—See advertisement p. 12.

Literary Criticism

Thought, Words and Creativity: Art and Thought in Lawrence, by F. R. Leavis (Chatto and Windus), London, 1976, 156 pp.,Hard cover, $13.15.

Readers seeing this book will be reminded of its predecessor, *D. H. Lawrence: Novelist*, first brought out by Dr Leavis some twenty years ago. In that earlier work Leavis gave an extensive account of one whom he regards as the greatest creative genius in the English language in our century and in this new book he might be seen as going over a good deal of the same ground, especially as *The Rainbow*, *Women in Love* and *The Captain's Doll*, all of which were treated in detail before, are again the focus of attention. While the selection of these works as the most expert demonstrations of Lawrence's creativity is no surprise it is more helpful to view Dr Leavis's reading of them in the light of his more recent book *The Living Principle* which is subtitled "English as a Discipline of Thought"; indeed the book under review can best be seen as a logical extension of that work, the two of them together constituting the culmination of the life and thought of a man who is now over eighty, who has lived through the whole of our century so far (he was born at about the same time that Hardy ceased to write novels and Conrad began to write them), who has been an observer/participant in the complex movement of our civilisation during that time and who has never ceased to care about literary values and what they reflect of the possibilities of life and living. Thus this book has a wider reference than its immediate subject (though Leavis would see the issues he takes up and Lawrence as inseparable). It is a considered statement about the plight of the world in which we find ourselves in the present.

In *The Living Principle* a good deal of Leavis's space was given to the place of T. S. Eliot and in particular a close examination of the *Four Quartets* to determine why it ultimately fails as a work of art. This failure is located not only in the individual limitations of Eliot as a poet but in the generally disquieting developments that have taken place in our civilisation as a whole. This failure is again taken up in *Thought, Words and Creativity* with respect to Eliot's criticism in which Leavis feels there is rather less of value to be found than in the poetry. Against this stands the figure of Lawrence who, while capable too, of a great failure like *The Plumed Serpent* which Leavis is at pains to point out as such, nevertheless represents the triumphantly creative human spirit. It is this that Leavis constantly affirms and that is the novelist's value to him. Lawrence enables the critic to define a number of key terms which he finds indispensable and which can only be apprehended through relevant particularities. For Leavis it is impossible to state a critical position in theoretical terms. Such a matter can only have meaning in terms of the specific and so the close criticial examination of texts is more than a matter of illustration of a given theory; without that demonstration it would be impossible to make the theoretical position at all. This is especially important where the definition of the key terms "thought" and "life" is concerned. In Chapter 11 Leavis states how profoundly anti-philosophical his turn of mind is; his argument is that the greatest truths cannot be apprehended by merely logical enquiry. The power of Lawrence is that of a

profoundly creative writer who through that language whose capacity to mean he so fully appreciates and successfully controls presents his readers with truths revealing the totality of experience. There is no "thought" underlying the works of the great creative artist. The work itself is the thought, conveyable in its totality in no other way, and it is the task of the literary critic (which is what all intelligent readers are) to come to grips with the nature of that thought.

A further major consideration of Leavis, by no means unique to this work, is what he sees as the disappearance of an educated reading public. This he traces historically, its loss being detectable after World War 1 and virtually complete with the collapse of *The Calendar of Modern Letters* in the mid-twenties. To the demise of this public Leavis relates the failure of another writer of Lawrence's stature to emerge since his death, as the one is not possible without the other. Our technological age has destroyed such a public and with that will ultimately go all that is truly civilising. Leavis is not without hope that signs of a revival of that public may be detected (its smallness will never be commensurate with its necessary influence) but such hope remains slim indeed.

This is an important book and should be read in conjunction with *The Living Principle*. It offers worthwhile insights into Lawrence as a writer for those who seek those, with Dr Leavis's renowned perceptiveness as a reader constantly in evidence in its startling illuminations. It puts cogently the case for literature as a necessary humanising influence without which a full understanding of the meaning of language cannot be arrived at; as such it is of vital interest to teachers who may have difficulty in sustaining the connection. It puts forth lucidly the situation in which all of us must live and find our way with an impressive weight of thinking, feeling, reading and experiencing behind it which is essential for all who are interested in the important issues of our time.

D.R.

Chekhov: A Study of the Major Stories and Plays, by Beverly Hahn (Cambridge University Press), Cambridge, 1977, xiii, 351 pp., Hardback, $28.40.

This study sets out to correct what its author sees as a number of misconceptions about Chekhov. While he is a distinctively modern writer in his themes and preoccupations he is not, on the one hand, to be linked with the absurdists or surrealists nor, on the other to be seen as ineffectually "gentlemanly". What distinguishes his work is the evolution of a sense of form, remarkable in that it was achieved in three distinct areas of interest: the short stories, the novella and the play. Though not concerned with details of biography to any extent Hahn traces the development of the art from the prolific period of early stories dashed off for comic periodicals in Moscow to the turning point of greater seriousness evident after 1886 when Chekhov committed himself to literature as a serious calling, quite as worthy of his fullest engagement as his earlier one of medicine. His letter to Grigorovich written in 1886 (quoted in full pp. 53-5) is interesting in this regard.

Hahn feels that, above all, Chekhov's short stories and novellas have not had their due and the bulk of her book is devoted to a close analysis of those that she

considers of the greatest interest or significance in the author's development. Some of the foremost, like "Lights", "The Duel", "The Party" and "The Lady with the Dog" are treated at length in chapters devoted to the one work. Her method involves a close look at structure and a detailed examination of key quoted passages. Although standard translations are used the author's comments have greater authority than this would indicate in that she does know Russian and chooses to quote in English for the benefit of the English reader who must depend upon translations. (Hence, too, her comments on the merits of the various popular translations are particularly helpful.)

Only two of the plays, *The Cherry Orchard* and *Three Sisters*, are dealt with in any detail, the latter Hahn considers Chekhov's most impressive work. She puts them in the context of the art of the short story, seeing the dramatic achievement emerging from that. Brief mention is made of some of the other plays but it would have been beneficial if the dramatic context could have been developed in more detail so that the intersection of all the threads of Chekhov's work could have been seen more clearly. It was apparently the desire to make the reader acquainted with the merits of the stories that left virtually no room even for such well known plays as *Uncle Vanya* and *The Seagull* (they are given a cursory dismissal). One's sense, however, is that this is a weighty examination of Chekhov with a substantial appreciation of the Russian literary environment in which he flourished which succeeds in enlightening the English-speaking reader in those plays that the author selects to bring to his attention.

D.R.

Tennyson, by Paul Turner (Routledge and Kegan Paul), London, Henley and Boston, 1976, xiv and 198 pp., Hard cover, $13.00.

This work is one of the series, Routledge Author Guides, under the General Editorship of B. C. Southam. The avowed intention of the General Editor is that the series is "trying to establish, in so far as this can be done, the social and historical context of the writer's life and times, and the cultural and intellectual tradition in which he stands, always remembering that critical and interpretative principles are implicit in any sound historical approach". The notion that any understanding of literature must be based on good scholarship is sound, for it is indispensable to the literary critic that he have at hand reliable and complete texts of an author, a thorough knowledge of the milieu in which he lived and a grasp of specific issues or movements of thought that bear upon the writing under consideration. That this is far easier said than done is apparent from the qualifications that Southam feels compelled to add to his statement. Scholarly considerations, to be meaningful and helpful, need to be guided by a clear sense of purpose and a scrupulous appreciation of what can be securely established as factual and relevant as against vague inferences from the generally contemporaneous.

Paul Turner has, unfortunately, not avoided the pitfalls inherent in his approach. He gives vast amounts of information about Tennyson's historical period, a thumbnail sketch of the poet's life, and a detailed scholarly list of influences, allusions and possible influences and allusions in the poems. The

problem is that he has not sorted out the truly important from the possibly interesting or distinctly misleading. It would be less than frank to suggest that his book has anything but limited use for student, teacher or general reader.

D.R.

Shakespeare Survey 30—"Henry IV" to "Hamlet": An Annual Survey of Shakespearian Study and Production, ed., Kenneth Muir (Cambridge University Press), Cambridge, 1977, 214 pp., Hardback, 10.50 Sterling.

This scholarly volume contains essays by a number of hands on such plays as *Henry V*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Tempest* and *All's Well that Ends Well*, in addition to the two indicated in the title. There are also essays dealing with the theatre in Shakespeare's time, an account of the R.S.C. productions at Stratford in 1976 and three useful surveys of the year's work in Shakespeare studies under the three headings of criticism, Shakespeare's life, times and style, and textual studies. The scope of the papers is beyond the needs of most high school students though it would be of benefit to the more able and advanced, as well as their teachers. For those readers the material on *Hamlet* is likely to be especially rewarding as the play is approached from a number of perspectives. Those bothered by the old chestnut of "Why does Hamlet delay?" will be stimulated by Barbara Everett's paper on time in the play and Inge-Stine Ewbank's study of the language of the play is more than welcome at a time when a plea for correlation of language and literature is so topical. Judging by the English price this book could be rather expensive in Australia but it would be a useful reference in the school library.

D.R.

Patrick White's Fiction, by William Walsh (George Allen and Unwin), Sydney, 1977, 136 pp., Hardback, $9.50, Paperback, $4.95.

This work surveys all of White's work, fiction, short stories and drama, from *Happy Valley* to *A Fringe of Leaves*. The author has a great admiration for his subject whom he feels to be greater than any contemporary British novelist; this is an aspect of his claim that the most exciting literature in English is at present being written outside England. The approach is, however, rather pedestrian offering little to any reader in search of help in his understanding of the novelist. Walsh has a penchant for the grand statement with very little sense of any careful examination to back it up, and an irritating attraction to the mixed metaphor. One example may serve as an epigraph to his study: "Here, [in an excerpt from *Happy Valley*] when Eden should above all be voicing the truth the novel is supremely meant to distil, we have a curiously mechanical and imitative jargon." (p 17).

D.R.

The Shakespeare Revolution: Criticism and Performance in the Twentieth Century, by J. L. Styan (Cambridge University Press), Cambridge, 1977, xii, 292 pp., Hardback, 6.50 Sterling (English Price only stated).

This is a stimulating book for all who are interested in promoting the fullest possible response to Shakespeare as both poet and dramatist. We are all of us too frequently brought into contact with the sort of academic criticism which treats the plays in conformity with Dr Johnson's definition of a play as a book meant to be recited before an audience, without any sense of the theatrical dimension as an essential element for total comprehension. At the same time Styan makes us aware of some of the horrific things that have been done to the text in the name of performance in the last hundred years, including bowdlerising it to suit prim Victorian tastes, preference for Tate's reconciliation scenes to the *Lear* Shakespeare actually wrote and, in one production, lowering the curtain over twenty times during a performance for elaborate changes of scene so that *Macbeth* was protracted to take three and a half hours! Styan traces the development of Shakespearian production from the Victorian emphasis on promoting the illusion of reality with elaborate scenery and costumes to the strictly non-illusory statements of Peter Brook, enlisting, as they do, the imaginative engagement of the audience in what is happening before them. With this goes the subsidance of the proscenium arch with the advent of more experimental theatrical design and performance. Styan also traces the variation in Shakespeare's critical fortunes in the same period and sees the two modes of appreciating Shakespeare, in the theatre and the study, as coming close together and necessarily enriching one another. The two dominant names of the century, representing the two approaches, are Granville Baker and Wilson Knight.

This is a scholarly book, fully researched, and makes fascinating reading. It places the ways in which Shakespeare has been approached in our century particularly in helpful perspective and allows us to think about how theatrical performance and studious regard for the text must interact. It provides useful ideas for those who are anxious to help their students to recognise that Shakespeare is more than words on a page which they find recalcitrant in yielding a meaning, but rather an essential part of our continuing heritage.

D.R.

Study Guide Series, ed. Augustine Martin (Gill and Macmillan), Dublin, 1972 onwards, $1.50.

Titles sighted: *Typhoon*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (Harrap, London Imprint), *Hard Times*, *Silas Marner*, *Animal Farm*.

The avowed purpose of this series is to avoid giving students ready-made answers to questions about novels it treats and to provoke a sensitive response on the student's part. The bulk of each booklet (they envelope some 40-50 pp.) is taken up with fairly detailed questions on the text, followed by more general overall questions; there is also a brief account of the author's life, some information about circumstances in which the work was written and a few general remarks about issues like theme. Unfortunately, whatever the expressed intention, a crib is a crib and the information given, despite the earnest professions, tends to be rather glib and there is the inevitable boredom for the student of wading through endless questions. There really is no substitute for a good

teacher provoking in the student a sense of the appropriate questions and guiding him to answer them; but for those who cannot resist the temptation this series should provide the sort of crutch they may think they need.

D.R.

Briefly

In this section of short notices, attention is drawn to books which may be of interest to English teachers. Some books are reprints.

Penguin Books are now publishing a number of paperbacks which were published originally as *The Viking Portable Library*. Each volume in the series presents a representative selection from the works of a well known writer with an extensive introductory essay. Some of the writers represented in the Portable series are Blake, Crane, Dante, Henry James, Bernard Shaw, Oscar Wilde, Milton, Chekhov, Rabelais and Swift. There are also a number of volumes of period poetry.

The books are about 700 pages in length, compact, readable and reasonably priced at around $6. School libraries might consider making these writers more accessible by putting these volumes on the shelves. Their appearance, price and content justifies the serious consideration of book buyers. (See advertisement page 8.)

Currency Press (87 Jersey Road, Woollahra 2025) is now distributing plays published by Price Milburn in Wellington. Teachers interested in literature from New Zealand, or just new titles, might like to hear about them.

The Two Tigers, by Brian McNeill, $3.50.

The relationship between Katherine Mansfield and John Middleton Murray is the subject of this sensitive, interesting play.

The Pohutukawa Tree, by Bruce Mason, $2.95.

One of New Zealand's best known plays. A most involving drama which explores the effects of a dominant culture over an indigenous minority culture.

The End of the Golden Weather, by Bruce Mason, $2.95.

A play which has been widely performed in New Zealand. An exploration of the author's childhood in that country.

Glide Time, by Roger Hall, $3.50.

This play will shortly be presented in Sydney. About life in the public service. Can you write a comedy about that?

New English Dramatists 7 (Penguin Books), Harmondsworth, 1963, Reprint 1977, 22 pp., Paperback, $2.25.

"Chips with Everything" by Arnold Wesker
"Afore Night Come" by David Rudkin
"Everything in the Garden" by Giles Cooper

Three plays sharing a common theme—the conflict between the individual and his social environment. This volume has been reprinted regularly since 1963 so the plays are standing the test of time.

Equus by Peter Shaffer (Penguin Books), Harmondsworth. Published as a

separate play 1977. (Film editon of the play.) Paperback, 109 pp., $1.50.

This magnificent, moving play needs no introduction. Should be considered for senior, mature, able students.

The Sonnets by William Shakespeare. Ed. by Douglas Bush and Alfred Harbage, (Penguin Books) New York, Reprinted 1977, 181 pp., Paperback, $2.50.

Most teachers will be familiar with the Pelican Shakespeare editions like this one. Consider a set of copies so senior pupils can read the sonnets "in toto" rather than in the selected form found in anthologies.

Flush by Virginia Woolf, $1.95.

Three Guineas by Virginia Woolf, (Penguin Books), 1977, $2.25.

Flush is the biography of a dog, Elizabeth Barrett Browning's spaniel. So, so.

Three Guineas is a very modern sounding argument for women's liberation and sexual equality (first published in Hogarth Press 1938). Thoug[illegible]provoking, and less aggressively polemical than some writings on those [illegible]mes. Worth reading for several reasons—not the least of which is the further insight it offers into Virginia Woolf's stand on women's issues. Her devotees should welcome this first paperback edition of the book.

The Letters and Journals of Katherine Mansfield. A selection edited by C. K. Stead (Penguin Books), Harmondsworth, 1977, 285 pp., Paperback, $2.95.

The kind of book you can read in a leisurely, random fashion. Gives the reader that special insight which only letters and journals can offer. This book may encourage you to read Katherine Mansfield's relatively small output of writing, and it is interesting in its own right.

Drama, by Margaret Williams (Oxford University Press), Melbourne, 1977, 46 pp., Paperback, $1.95.

A very readable account of the development of Australian drama. A useful reference booklet on an area of Australian literature which needs further exploration. A must for libraries.

Stop Press

Life Pieces: Ten Australian plays, by Alan Mackay (Hodder & Stoughton), Sydney, 1977, 204 pp., Paperback, $4.95.

The clamour for new script material for classroom drama work continues unabated. Foxily re-packaged collections containing "The Crimson Cocoanut" and "Queer Street" continue to sell, presumably because teachers buy sets of them out of sheer desperation. They have to put *something* in their students' hands! The problem seems to be that the one-act play *for the theatre* is a very rare bird these days. With the decline in radio drama, television scripts are almost the only source of "compact" plays, and they represent a very special

kind of dramatic writing, useful in our classrooms, but hardly sufficient as the sole basis for a course. So what do teachers select as examples of scripted drama for those students who are ready to approach the printed play, but not quite ready for Shakespeare? (Remember when Second Years used to read *The Merchant of Venice*?)

The probable solution, it seems to me, lies in some enterprising editor's collecting a series of abridged versions of self-contained scenes from successful full-length plays. There are a number of pieces from the contemporary British, American and Australian theatre which would yield "scenes" that could be of value in the classroom. These would conceivably afford the literary value so depressingly lacking in most of what is available now, and might even ultimately lead students to an interest in reading the full work. Plays like *Blue Denim*, *Billy Liar*, *The Member of the Wedding* and *The Lucky Streak* come readily to mind. I think such a book could work.

In the meantime, Allan Mackay, a local high school drama teacher, has taken another approach. He has written ten original pieces which, the publisher's blurb proclaims, "concern the stuff of which teenage life is made". The author's preface designates his plays as "working scripts", requiring proper theatrical realisation, and for this purpose they seem to me to be quite useful. Each short play would run about fifteen minutes, staging is simple, and technical requirements minimal, casts generally small and roles well distributed. The dialogue is colloquial and acceptably accurate. The plays are best when not striving for significance. Those with more apparently mundane settings—the school playground, a study room in the senior library, the school hall after the Sixth Form farewell—seem to me to offer most. The playwright has been concerned that the pieces in his book are cardinally "relevant", and though they might not be much use as literary touchstones, they could well suit the needs of student actors (and student or teacher directors) who want to get up from their desks and have a go. I could imagine a selection of these plays constituting an acceptably fresh kind of play night. (Oddly, the publisher says nothing about performance rights.)

It's a sturdy enough paperback (18 cm. square), and the text is admirably clear in presentation. The illustrations seem to me rather fatuous. It's certainly worth considering for your junior school needs until something better comes along. If ever.

F.B.

Viewpoints 78 (Victoria H.S.C.), Brian McFarlane (ed), Melbourne, Sorrett, 1978.

Perspectives 78, (N.S.W. H.S.C.), Jan Fox and Brian McFarlane (eds), Melbourne, Sorrett, 1978.

Viewpoints has been with us for several years and has, no doubt, built up a considerable market already. *Perspectives* is a version revised and added to with the N.S.W. Higher School Certificate in mind. Both books disclaim being "cribs", though many of their purchasers will use them as such, taking the essays by

(mainly) academic critics as authoritative rather than tentative.

This is a pity; the books deserve to be used more intelligently. As one among many available critical sources, these anthologies have a useful role. They are superior to most of the other offerings in the field of "helps for the student". Teachers with, for many works, limited time to research and limited access to published criticism will find these a valuable resource. Students using them carefully will find their perceptions sharpened, although some of the essays have a better sense of audience than others. The influence of Leavis is strong.

N.S.W. readers will find their collection far from staid: Mary Dove's essay on Chaucer's "Miller's Tale" could become a collector's item.

N.W.

The Critical Examination, by Malcolm Peet and David Robinson (Wheaton), London, 1977, $5.60.

Teachers to whom I have shown this book have been much taken with its realistic approach and fine sense of audience. The delightfully ambiguous title (perhaps not deliberate) embodies the book's double aim: to help students prepare for an "unseen" examination passage, and to encourage a healthy criticism that is "an essentially creative and personal activity". (p. x) The authors work from concrete examples of literary texts and students' written responses. While working within the English school of "close reading", they are far from pedantic, but engagingly personal. Commonly used critical terms are clarified. They go beyond impressionism to specific reference to the literary language itself.

While I have some reservations about the lit. crit. orientation of *The Critical Examination*, I commend it for its pragmatism:

> Since it is part and parcel of a teacher's job to get his or her students through the examination, that teacher's approach to literature must inevitably be shaped not only by the criteria of the examiners (which may not in themselves be bad) but also by the conditions of the examination itself, and these *are* completely irrelevant to a true appreciation of literature.

The book will be most useful with those advanced students to whom traditional literary criticism has most to offer.

N.W.

H.S.C. English Resource Book 1978, Moira Eastman (Macmillan/Dove Communications), Melbourne, 1978, $6.95.

As a New South Welshman I envy my Victorian colleagues a senior syllabus in which prescribed texts are offered "not as a body of knowledge, nor as the 'content' of the course", but as a basis for wide-ranging language activity. Although we could live without "prescribed" books (why not "suggested"?), I am impressed with the scope and relevance of the books discussed in this anthology. I would commend them, and their thematic groupings, to senior English coursemakers in any State.

Is this just another "crib"? It might serve that function, but could not really be used apart from lively response both in discussion and writing. This is truly a *resource* book, encouraging reflection on relevant human issues beyond the narrow concerns of lit. crit., including related readings from a dazzling range of sources, asking real, not pseudo-questions.

While the book's primary function is in the Victorian context, Year 11 and 12 teachers in other states will find useful approaches to such authors as Camara Laye, Heinrich Boll, Chinua Achebe, Glendon Swarthout (*Bless the Beasts and Children*), Thea Astley, David Martin, Ken Kesey, as well as Sophocles and Jane Austen. As a Wollongong resident, I find it ironic that local writer Mary Liverani's *The Winter Sparrows*, a sensitive autobiographical novel, not recognised in our schools, is a set text in Victoria. Perhaps Moira Eastman's inclusion of it will stimulate other schools to study it too.

Used responsibly, this book must enliven your senior English classes.

N.W.

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Marjorie Aldred	North Sydney Girls' High School
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INDEX

	page
Action Pack	46
Bestellers	31
Books for the Retarded Reader	26
Cass Butcher Bunting	48
Catcher in the Rye	39, 40
Catherine	48
Chekhov: A Study of the Major Stories and Plays	57
Child Language, learning and linguistics	6
Children and Language	9
Children and their Books	54
Children's Books of the Year '76	54
College Composition and Communication	10
Contemporary English	18
Cool Web	54
Critical Examination	65
Development of Reading Skills: A Handbook of Resources for Teachers	26
Dictionary of Australian Colloquialisms	35
Dimensions	19
Dinky Hocker Shoots Smack!	39
Drama	63
Dramakit	45
End of the Golden Weather	62
English Education	24
English for Middle Years	16
English Journal	23
Equus	62
Errors and Expectations	23
Falcon Comics	29
Five Plays for Stage, Radio and Television	49
Flag Series	27
Flush	63
Foreman	47
Free Writing! A Group Approach	23
From Talkers to Readers the Natural Way	25
Getting Across: A Guide to good speaking and writing	38
Ghost on the Hill	40
Glide Time	62
Goodnight. Prof, Love	40
Good Writers for Young Readers	54
Grammatical Analysis of Language Disability	38
Guide to Language and Literature	15
Headliner Series	31
Homo Loquens: Man as a Talking Animal	37
H.S.C. English Resource Book 1978	65
Inner Voices	49
Intruder	40
Jagardoo	43
Knight Riders Series	31
Knowing in My Bones	46
Language Across the Curriculum	9
Language Across the Curriculum—Guidelines for Schools	9
Language Arts	24
Language, Learning and Remedial Teaching	6
Language One: An English Course for Secondary Schools	16
Language Tree: An English Handbook for Senior Students	19
Learning through Language	17
Leaving School: A Survival Guide	19
Letters and Journals of Katherine Mansfield	63
Life Pieces: Ten Australian Plays	63
Machine-Gunners	39
Nelson Contemporary English Dictionary	35
New English Dramatists 7	62

	page
New Hooked on Books	23
New Life	47
No Man's Land	39
Orbit Series	28
Other Way Round	40
Over My Shoulder	42
Patrick White's Fiction	59
Perspectives on Reading	25
Perspectives	64
Pleasure and Repentance	44
Pohutukawa Tree	62
Problem Plays	48
Projected Muse	51
Reading and Teaching Poetry Vol. 3	10
Reading and Teaching the Novel Vol. 4	11
Reading and Teaching the Novel Vol. 5	11
Reading Problems: Identification and Treatment	25
Reflections of Reality: The Media in Australia	52
Rhetoric and Composition	22
Rocket Series	27
Rumble Fish	40
Second Thoughts	42
Seeds of Time	40
Shakespeare Survey 30: Henry IV to Hamlet	59
Shakespeare Revolution: Criticism and Performance in the Twentieth Century	59
Sonnets—Shakespeare	63
Sound of Coaches	39
Spinner Series	28
Springboards: Ideas for Drama	46
Stride Ahead in English	20
Stronghold	40
Study Guide Series	60
Summer of My German Soldier	39
Summer of the Seventeenth Doll	50
Talking and Learning	9
Talking in School	36
Talking, Writing and Learning 8-13	5
Teaching: Active or Passive	9
Teaching Children English: A Language Policy for Primary and Middle Schools	9
Teaching Composition: 10 Bibliographical Essays	22
Tennyson	58
32 Voices	7
Thought, Words and Creativity: Art and Thought in Lawrence	56
Three Guineas	63
Top Flight Readers	27
Topliner Series	32-34
Tracker Series	29
True Grit	40
Two Tigers	62
Uncommon Common Sense	20
Upstaged—one-act plays for schools	50
Viewpoints '78	64
Viking Portable Library	8, 62
What's It All About?	26
Whywords: The Shapes of Shadows	16
Wordswork: The Language of Literature and Life	13
Word with You: Basic English for Secondary Schools	20
World Moves Slowly: A Documentary History of Australian Women	52
Write Now: Some Stimuli for Reading and Writing	16
Writers Alive!	54
Writer's Approach to the TV/Film Script	52
Youth Writes No. 6	43
Zoom In: Television Scripts of the Seventies	51